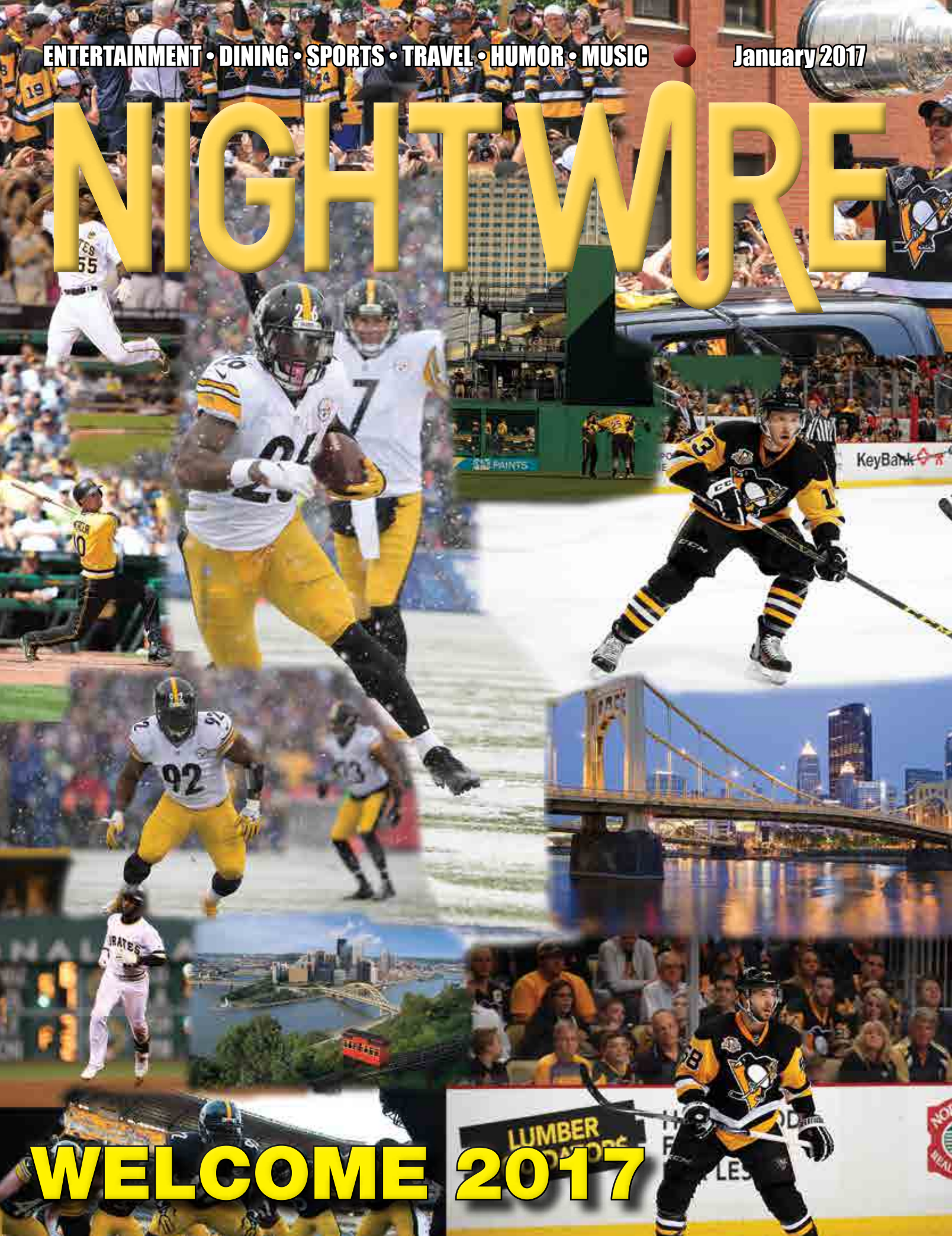


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January 2017

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# SPORTS:

## It's Inevitable

by Stacy Kauffman, Sports Editor, Nightwire Magazine  
Pittsburgh Steeler Photos ©2016 Pittsburgh Steelers, Karl Roser, Pittsburgh Penguin Photos ©2016 Pittsburgh Penguins, Pittsburgh Pirates Photos ©2016 Pittsburgh Pirates

As the calendars get tossed and we start writing the wrong year on our checks, resolve is high to do things differently in the coming twelve months. We reflect on the previous year, notice our shortcomings while celebrating our achievements. A performance review of sorts, similar to an end of season exit interview for professional and collegiate athletes. Strengths noted but also the weaknesses to improve upon for the next season.

So, as we exit 2016, let's review where the city's teams must focus their resolve in 2017 to either sustain success - like the Penguins - or bounce back from a cruddy performance - like the Pirates. Suggestion box, get ready.

### Steelers

A month ago, deciding where the Steelers must improve would have been simple. A glaring weakness that a cyclops wearing an eye patch could see. The defense that allowed 113 points over a four-game stretch, all losses. However, during their current five-game winning streak, Keith Butler's crew has held opponents to 70 points total and played a big role in regaining control of the AFC North. January football comes down to a handful of things. Defense is one of them.





Quarterback play is another. Especially performing away from home. As a team, the Steelers have finished the road portion of their schedule with a 5-3 record, so you wouldn't think that would be an area of concern, however the play of Ben Roethlisberger outside of Heinz Field is another matter. Throwing for nearly 100 yards less per game with eight of his eleven interceptions coming on the road, Big Ben has come up small in hostile territory. Resolving to get him going will be a key to success as they will not have home field advantage throughout the playoffs.

### **Penguins**

Hockey is a game of attrition and for the Stanley Cup Champion Penguins, resolving to stay as healthy as possible during the grueling 82-game season is a priority. This is evident right now, as the Penguins are missing top defenseman, Kris Letang. The highest scoring team before Letang went down, the Pens have been held to just one goal in two overtime losses since number 58 has been in the press





drink the Kool-Aid for so long until the taste becomes sickly sweet and you throw up. That's where the Pirate fan base is right about now. Signing Ivan Nova will go a little way to curing those ills.

### **Pitt**

Conveniently for me, the two major men's teams at the University both need to improve in the same area, but their starting points have stark differences. Improved defense is what each group needs this year. The football team is on its way up, wrapping their regular season ranked after banking wins against what turned out to be two top five teams in Penn State and Clemson. The basketball program is in a transition period, adapting to the new game plan from head coach Kevin Stallings, which is predicated on offensive freedom, instead of stout defense, and it shows.

Pat Narduzzi's defense allowed 452 yards per game, ranked 98th in the country. The fourth quarter was especially horrid, where teams racked up the passing yards. The pass defense gave up 343 yards on average. That cost the Panthers a couple



of games, and they were lucky it didn't cost them more.

On the hardwood, Pitt has gotten off to some nice starts, but have fallen apart in the second half. A killer instinct starts with defensive stops and the Panthers are struggling in that department, allowing 73 points per game in their non-conference schedule. Good for 210th in the country. Yikes.

*Stacy Kauffman, Sports Feature Writer for Nightwire Magazine can be heard weekends on CBS Sports Radio 93.7 The Fan, and has appeared on numerous sports media outlets including Fox Sports Pittsburgh, CBS and ESPN Radio. She can be reached on Twitter @SportsnWhatnot or at sportsnwhatnot@gmail.com*





# Pittsburgh Public Theater Presents - The Play

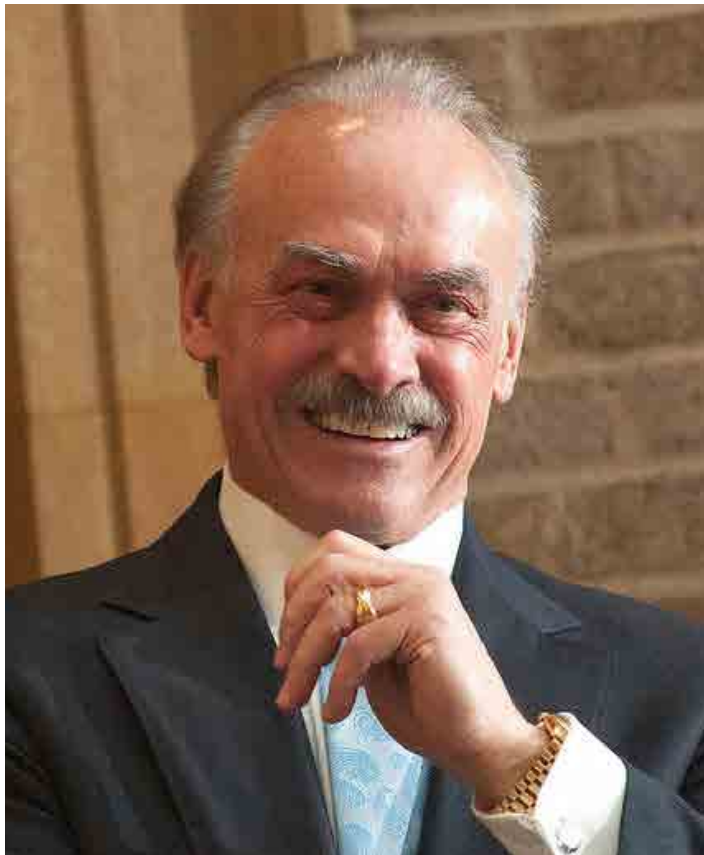
In a show that's both authentic and highly theatrical, Steelers legend ROCKY BLEIER tells his true story live on the O'Reilly Theater stage.

Pittsburgh Public Theater is thrilled to welcome four-time Super Bowl champion Rocky Bleier, who will perform his one-man show, *The Play*, live on the O'Reilly Theater stage. Based on Rocky's life story, *The Play* was written by Gene Collier, a Pittsburgh Post-Gazette sports journalist and co-author (with Rob Zellers) of *The Chief*, The Public's hit about Steelers founder Art Rooney, Sr.

Directed by Scott C. Wise, *The Play* will run for 14 performances only, December 20 – January 7 at the O'Reilly Theater, Pittsburgh Public Theater's home in the heart of Downtown's Cultural District. For tickets call 412.316.1600 or visit [ppt.org](http://ppt.org). *The Play* is presented by Steelers Nation Unite with UPMC as the production sponsor.

A native of Appleton, Wisconsin, Rocky lived with his family above his Dad's bar, which is the first setting of *The Play*. The second part takes place in a Pittsburgh bar, where Rocky recalls being selected in the 16th round of the 1968 draft by the Pittsburgh Steelers, only to be drafted one year later by the Army and sent to Vietnam. Severely injured, he was not expected to ever play football again. But with personal determination and the encouragement of Mr. Rooney and other team members, Rocky was back at training camp in 1970. The third part of *The Play* is set in the bar of his Pittsburgh home. There Rocky looks back on being part of the Steelers dynasty, whose Super Bowl victories include 1975, 1976, 1979, and 1980.

The design team for *The Play* is Anne Mundell (Scenic), Ted Pappas (Costumes), Andrew Ostrowski (Lighting), and Steve Shapiro (Sound). Maria Scheller is the Production Stage Manager.



## Performance Schedule

**Tues. Dec. 20, Wed. Dec. 21 & Thurs. Dec. 22 at 7 pm**

**Tues. Dec. 27 at 1 pm**

**Wed. Dec. 28, Thurs. Dec. 29 & Fri. Dec. 30 at 7 pm**

**Sat. Dec. 31 at 1 pm**

**Tues. Jan. 3, Wed. Jan. 4, Thurs. Jan 5 & Fri. Jan 6 at 7 pm**

**Sat. Jan. 7 at 1 and 7 pm**

**Ticket prices: \$50 & \$75. Tickets for students and age 26 and younger are \$15.75.**

**Discounts for groups of 10+ are available by contacting Casey Helm at 412.316.8200 ext. 704 or [chelm@ppt.org](mailto:chelm@ppt.org).**

**Ticket prices are subject to change  
For tickets call 412.316.1600, go to [ppt.org](http://ppt.org),  
or visit the O'Reilly Theater box office**

# Pittsburgh Cultural Trust Invites Everyone

To The Gallery Crawl In The Cultural District On Friday January 20, 2017

Free Events, All Ages Welcome



Happy New Year! Everyone is invited to visit the Cultural District this month and enjoy a variety of free events for all ages that will take place during the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust's Gallery Crawl in the Cultural District on Friday, January 20, 2017. Galleries and various venues throughout the footprint of the Cultural District, along Penn Avenue and Liberty Avenue, will be bustling with visual art openings, films, live music, comedy and dance performances and much more. The Gallery Crawl, now in its 13th year, is presented four times a year and attracts thousands of people who enjoy experiencing a first-look at the exhibit openings and premieres of thought-provoking works by award-winning local, national and international artists.

One visual arts highlight for the January Crawl not to miss is 'Permutations of Light' by Canadian artist David Spriggs and Amsterdam based Matthijs Munnik that will be on view at Wood Street Galleries. This exhibit makes its U.S. debut, with newly commissioned works specific for the gallery. Marqui Lyons, Program Manager of Strategic Partnerships and Community Engagement-Pittsburgh Cultural Trust shares, "We look forward to welcoming everyone to the Cultural District for this winter time Gallery Crawl. This will be a great evening for family and friends to stay warm while enjoying a variety of indoor happenings within a short walking distance from each other."



The January 20th Gallery Crawl begins at 5:30pm and ends at 10:00pm. In addition, attendees can enjoy events taking place



as part of the CrawlAfterDark, such as Jarrod Lawson at the August Wilson Center (ticketed event at 9:00pm) and Comedy Royale at Arcade Comedy Theater beginning at 10:00pm. To help attendees access a full schedule of Gallery Crawl events and plan their evening, the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust launched a microsite that is user and mobile friendly, [www.TrustArts.org/CRAWL](http://www.TrustArts.org/CRAWL). For a complete schedule and information, visit the website or call guest services at 412-456-6666.

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# History and Innovation at Straub Brewery

by Brian Meyer

Surviving in the beer world for even for the 30-ish years that we've had craft beer as we know it isn't an easy undertaking, which means if you knew of a brewery that's been active since the 70's, it would be a pretty big deal. While this sounds impressive, Straub has been in business not since the 1970's, but the 1870's. So, while some breweries are celebrating 25 years in business, this coming year Straub will be celebrating 145 years in the family-owned business of brewing beer (minus a few years for Prohibition of course).

As impressive as this may be, the truly impressive story is their continued dedication to quality and innovation today. As we enter 2017, Straub Brewery is making strides to brew the best beer they've ever made while helping to protect the environment so they can still be making beer for another 145 years and beyond.

## Some History

As with many early breweries Straub Brewery gained its name from the founder Peter Straub. Originally from Felldorf, Wuerttemberg, Germany, Peter was originally educated in the art of wooden barrel and cask making. As a cooper Peter was also able to learn about the world of brewing since this is where many of his barrels made their way to.

In 1869 at the age of 19 Peter Straub made his way to the United States, settling in Allegheny City, Pennsylvania. He continued to hone his brewing skills working at the Eberhardt and Ober brewery, which today is the location of Penn



Brewery.

After working for a few different breweries Peter finally settled in St. Mary's, PA and founded his namesake brewery, Straub Brewery, Inc.

Today Straub Brewery is designated as an American Legacy Brewery thanks to its 142-plus years of operation as an independent, family-owned brewery. This means that Straub has produced great beer for five generations, showing that keeping a brewery family-oriented and independent is not only possible, but rewarding.

## It's Not Easy Being Green

Green beer isn't something most of us think about when we talk about craft breweries, but at Straub Brewery the goal is to make every ounce of beer as green as possible. While we're obviously not talking about the color of the beer itself, the idea of a brewery that cares about the environment is one that we should all be able to get behind.

Many breweries today operate in a way that minimizes waste, but when it comes to bottling beer, the waste involved with the bottles themselves is hard to avoid. Sure, you can recycle glass, but this only works so many times until the glass just can't be recycled any longer. What's more, bottles are often thrown away without a thought about recycling, filling the landfill with waste that just shouldn't be there.





Straub Brewery is helping to solve this problem with a solution that comes out of beer's history books by continuing and promoting the use of returnable bottles. While Straub has done this for generations, they recently won an award from The Pennsylvania Resources Council for "Leadership in Reusable Packaging."

Believe it or not, Straub is the last brewery in the United States to still package their beer in 16-ounce returnable bottles, and thanks to a new partnership with glass-packaging maker Owens-Illinois they will be able to keep filling those returnable bottles for years to come.

Along with their returnable "Pounder" 16-ounce bottles, Straub is also dedicated to the art of canning beer as well. Aluminum cans are easier to recycle, use less resources when shipped by weighing less and allowing for more cans in each shipment, and best of all they keep your beer as fresh as possible. With their environmental stewardship in mind, Straub is exploring the expansion of their canning line to include a wider range of their beers.

### Coming Up in 2017

While it will be hard to top the number of awards earned in 2016 including a Bronze medal at the Great American beer Fest for their Straub Kölsch Ale and the Gold medal at the





2016 Open Beer Championship, 2017 is looking to be even better.

In the coming year, we'll get to see PA's own family-owned Straub Brewery on the popular adventure-travel TV series Fireball Run, which is in its 10th season. 2017 will also see the continuation of new and exciting beers from Straub as well as the seasonal and year-round favorites we've grown to love.

Coming back for another season like it was just here yesterday is Straub's Groundhog Altbier. This copper-colored beer features a pronounced malt flavor and is brewed in the old German style, hence its German name. Coming in at 5.4% ABV, Groundhog Altbier is exactly what you need to get you through those inevitable 6 more weeks of winter our friendly prognosticator of prognosticators seems to always bring us.



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# Movie Reviews

NIGHTWIRE - FILM REVIEWS by FIORE

## A MONSTER CALLS

I'm not a fan of films designed solely to tug at the heart strings. I find cheap sentimentality disturbing. A MONSTER CALLS centers around this theme. Siobhan Dowd originally wrote the tale, but died before it was finished. Patrick Ness completed the work, and wrote this screenplay version. Already it sounds like leaching off the dead. At least when Max Allen Collins finishes Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer novels, it was first under the guidance and tutelage of Spillane and later, with his blessings.

A MONSTER CALLS follows the template set in so many children's novels. The concept is to help a child deal with grief. This grief comes in many forms: the loss of a friend or pet; bullying at school; moving to a new location; the death of a parent; or the horror of having two mommies instead of a normal family unit. The template first establishes the dilemma, perceived or actual, and then proceeds to relate an anecdote revealing how the child is special, regardless of environment or situation, and that all lifestyles and manners are viable. There is also a moral, though none are as concrete as Aesop's Fables.

In A MONSTER CALLS, the premise is the death of a parent. Lewis MacDougall plays Conor, a socially awkward middle school boy who is suffering through the disintegration of his family, and the death of his mother, slowly to cancer. Immediately, you can tell this is the type of film that will not lift your spirits or compensate for an incredibly hard week at work. Conor's mom and dad are divorced. His father has moved to another country and remarried, starting a new family that Conor is not interested in being a part of. His mother, played by Felicity Jones, is dying of cancer. Though she remains optimistic, the medications continually fail, despite their increased strength. Between the problems at home and school, and his mother's imminent death, Conor spirals out of control, refusing to admit the truths and realities of his life. To compound his traumas, his grandmother, played by Sigourney Weaver, is King Kong to his Godzilla. They are constantly at odds, and just don't like each other.

Amidst all this emotional distress, Liam Neeson appears, in voice-over only, as a monster, culled from the ages of a massive Yew tree. The monster is not set on Conor's destruction – that would truly be a horror film – but rather guiding the boy to see life as it is and force him to confront



inalienable truths surrounding his current state of existence.

While these are all noble themes, they are redundant from various other stories. These concepts may help small children cope with life's hurdles, but their presentation is certainly not on a child's level. A MONSTER CALLS is more of an instructional film for parents and relatives to ensure they are handling these types of situations in the prescribed manner of current psychological thought. The one disturbing message brought out in the film is the uselessness of punishment. When Conor rebels against his circumstances, often in violent manner, he expects to be punished; but though he is caught, no one is willing to enforce civility. Excuses, and the general despising of corporal punishment are tantamount. Due to his circumstances, his behavior is acceptable. This was the ideology of the 1970's which produced an entire generation of convenient morality. The decision is more harmful to Conor as it causes him to believe his actions have no consequences, which sounds quite like the immature behavior of rioters and protestors currently disrupting society.

### KEY SCENES TO LOOK FOR:

1. **The emergence of the monster**
2. **The scrapbook**

The presence of the monster, and the special effects (SFX) used to bring the tree beast to life, are what sets A MONSTER CALLS apart. Production Designer Eugenio Caballero provides powerful visualization for Neeson's chorused echo-chambered voice. The CGI is impressive and cinematography of Oscar Faura, alternating from long shots to extreme close-ups, allows the viewer to escape in the film's fantasy.

Ness' script becomes problematic when the monster insists on telling three stories. Except for the first, the tales are



not fables with morals, but rather instructions for destructive behavior. Master Po never taught Caine the concepts of being a Shaolin monk by telling him to destroy everyone in his life.

The monster's three tales must be followed by Conor telling his own personal truth. Whoever set up these rules of engagement was on an amazing herbal high. The concept is ludicrous and detracts from the fantasy-reality conflict of the film.

One outstanding feature of the film is the excellent orchestration by Fernando Velazque. The soundtrack easily segues from rousing to pensive. It serves well as listening ambiance. However, at times, the soundtrack is so prominent, the monster's narration is muddled. The audio mix is off and not well balanced.

A MONSTER CALLS is akin to its star; "a boy too old to be a child and too young to be a man." It is bordering on the edge of being a child's movie, tailored for those suffering the loss of a parent to disease, and an adult fantasy. Somewhere in the scripting, the focus blurs and the film loses its impact.

## THE GRADE FOR A MONSTER CALLS = C

### MANCHESTER BY THE SEA

Director and Scriptwriter Kenneth Lonergan begins his film, MANCHESTER BY THE SEA, with entertaining and aspiring techniques. It begins with a video montage of a scenic New England cove and harbor with crisp, clean images provided by Cinematographer Jody Lee Lipes. The movie immediately shifts to dialogue sequences, used to establish key characters. During these scenes, which take place in homes and work establishments, the characters' dialogue is in audio competition with a radio. At first, it appears the audio mix by Kevin Parker is amateurish; but soon it is apparent the reports from the radio are establishing the background for the characters and the story. When necessary, the radio reports are louder to accent



key elements of the forthcoming plotline. It's good stuff, but then both techniques stop and MANCHESTER BY THE SEA spirals into an insipid, depressing snippet of gloom. This is what the condescending critics in the two letter cities call "a masterpiece"; and what the rest of us call a waste of two hours.

Casey Affleck is Lee Chandler. He is a janitor and handy-man for an apartment complex in Boston, who does not suffer fools lightly. He is brooding and dark, due to a tragic event in his past that claimed the lives of his children and disintegrated his marriage to Randi Chandler, played by Michelle Williams. Lee's world is turned upside down with the unexpected death of his brother Joe, played by Kyle Chandler. As part of his will, Joe appoints Lee as guardian of his teenage son, Patrick, played by Lucas Hedges. Lee, living the life of a martyr for his past, is now saddled with a vibrant young man enveloped in the joys of life.

#### KEY SCENES TO LOOK FOR:

1. THE PING PONG GAME
2. STALE CONVERSATION

Lesley Barber provides a somber score, but relies heavily on non-original classical tunes to compliment the soundtrack. One of the key scenes combines the visual elements with the music of Tomaso Albinoni's Adagio Per Archi e Organo in Sol Minore, played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra. This music, which is used in other films, is dark and disheartening. The film this music was used most effectively was in James Caan's version of ROLLERBALL, where it was coupled along with excerpts from Dmitri Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5. The morose melodies were used in a collision montage, enhancing their effectiveness.

MANCHESTER BY THE SEA is garnering accolades for the cast. It is unnecessary. Affleck is already established as a premiere Indie film actor, much as Ryan Gosling was earlier in his career. Always be suspicious when a film's claim to fame is the acting. Generally, it implies the story is lame and only the thespian qualities of the stars, salvage a celluloid catastrophe.

Bruce Lee said, in ENTER THE DRAGON: "you could say mine is the art of fighting, without fighting." MANCHESTER BY THE SEA is a member of a myriad mass of movies that have an ending, without having an ending. Lee's version is better. When the screen went black, I said, aloud: "Don't tell me that's the ending?!" It was; and that is unfortunate because it made all of the dragged-out storyline before it moot. Suspended conclusions can be effective: just re-watch John Carpenter's THE THING for proof. But, more often than not, they serve as a cruel

form of “talus interruptus” for the viewer, and such is the case here.

MANCHESTER BY THE SEA is being touted as a strong awards contender. It is the only film from Amazon Studios with a strong promotional push. This may account for the hype. Many Hollywood studios are peeved at Netflix, not only for producing its own programming, but for making its show and movies award winning quality. Amazon is challenging Netflix, and many Hollywood insiders would like to see Amazon take down Netflix a peg or two. It won't do that with MANCHESTER BY THE SEA.

The film is over two hours of utter depression. There is nothing to enjoy and certainly nothing meriting a second view. The only people who could possibly revel in this film, are the progressive liberals who are still in shock and disbelief over the elections. In MANCHESTER BY THE SEA, they have something more depressing than their bashed political aspirations.

Two hours and twenty minutes of gloom and misery presented in anecdotal form, without a solid sequential story to salvage the melancholy; skip this one.

## THE GRADE FOR MANCHESTER BY THE SEA = D

### NOCTURNAL ANIMALS

NOCTURNAL ANIMALS is garnering a lot of attention this awards season. It's the type of film condescending critics from the two letter cities love; a seemingly monothematic oeuvre which works on several levels for those willing to search for hidden meanings. While the movie is stylish, having the mien of an award winner, it is basically a tale told too long with a lengthy mid-section of esoteric babble causing the film's pace to slow like the proverbial molasses in January.

Director, producer and writer Tom Ford begins with a simple lover's triangle tale. Edward Sheffield (Jake Gyllenhaal) and Susan Morrow (Amy Adams) fall in love and marry during their college post-graduate years. After time, Susan discovers she cannot exist on love alone, and desire the privileges of the silver spoon with which she was born. She dumps Edward for Hutton (Armie Hammer) and is somewhat content living a loveless life complete with creature comforts. Edward reenters Susan's life years later, by sending her a manuscript of his forthcoming novel. The novel contains all the elements of life she craves – love, violence, revenge and justice. It is here NOCTURNAL ANIMALS takes a nice turn.

Rather than stay on the mundane lover's triangle, Ford presents the story of the novel. In it, Tony Hastings (played by Gyllenhaal in a dual role) and his family are travelling for a weekend excursion, when a group of nefarious no-goods waylay them on the highway. After a grueling sequence of mischief and torture, Tony's wife Laura (Isla Fisher) and daughter India (Ellie Bamber)



are raped and murdered. Tony is left abandoned in the middle of the desert. Soon, he connects with Sheriff Bobby Andes (Michael Shannon) who is hellbent on bringing the jackals to justice.

Gyllenhaal is in fine acting form. He is riding the crest of an acting wave from his powerful performance in NIGHTCRAWLER. Shannon is just as convincing in his role as he was when playing General Zod in MAN OF STEEL. Adams offers a strong performance, but one that is not complimentary toward women, indicting them as vindictive materialists.

### KEY SCENES TO LOOK FOR:

1. THE BOARD MEETING
2. WAILING AT THE BAR

The true stars of NOCTURNAL ANIMALS are Seamus McGarvey and Joan Sobel, who serve as cinematographer and editor, respectively. McGarvey shoots both stories with similar shots. As they are told simultaneously, he dissolves from one tale to the other with the same shot composition. It is an appealing visual technique.

Sobel does a fine job splicing McGarvey's shots together, but she stumbles twice, and each is monumental. As mentioned earlier, the middle of NOCTURNAL ANIMALS slows to a crawl. Part of this may be blamed on Ford as scriptwriter, but the sequence becomes too philosophical on a fortune cookie level, and crumbles all the tension and suspense built heretofore. It has the effect of making the two-hour movie seem like a mini-series. The second is the use of a jump cut in the film's opening reel. That thud you hear is the sound of thousands of my former students collapsing on the floor at the mention of the dreaded, mortal sin of celluloid - the jump cut. Anyone using this technique on any level of filmmaking, should be quartered and shot at dawn. Period.

There is a quite respectable score by Abel Korzeniowski, and certainly Francine Maisler should be credited for bringing Gyllenhaal, Shannon and Adams together as they form a

powerful film trio.

It is billed and promoted as a revenge tale, but *NOCTURNAL ANIMALS* is a simplistic character study wrapped around the eternal lover's triangle. It's clever presentation of a story inside a story is what sets the movie apart. Without the visual imagery, *NOCTURNAL ANIMALS*, like Quentin Tarantino's *PULP FICTION*, is much ado about nothing.

## THE GRADE FOR *NOCTURNAL ANIMALS* = C

### ROGUE ONE

*STAR WARS* fans, Disney and the folk at Lucas Films should all pray this Christmas season for Gareth Edwards. The man, literally, saves the decomposing franchise of a galaxy far, far away from becoming totally irrelevant. This is not to say *ROGUE ONE* is an excellent movie; far from it. But, it certainly aims the franchise back on the right track after the complete debacle that was *THE FORCE AWAKENS*.

Let's begin by stating outright, there was absolutely no need to make *ROGUE ONE*. We all know the story. In the beginning of *A NEW HOPE*, the graphic crawl and the opening characterizations, tell the tale of how valiant members of the Rebel Alliance, through great sacrifice and martyrdom, manage to steal the schematics of the Empire's Death Star. These blue prints will enable the Rebel forces to find a pre-programmed weakness in the weapon, and destroy it. "Help me Obi Wan. You are our only hope."

Like the first three episodes, anyone watching the initial trilogy did not need visualization of a twice-told tale. I am flummoxed at the desire or necessity for fanboys to insist on the creation of backstories. Since the entire concept of *ROGUE ONE* was told in the opening moments of *A NEW HOPE*, the only element making it worth watching is Edward's approach. "I wanted to make a war film," he said in a pre-release interview. "It's a very rich scenario in which to set a movie."

He succeeds, and therefore, so does *ROGUE ONE*. The opening 25 minutes of the film are absolute boredom. Even with Easter



Eggs thrown in, the story drags. The last fifty minutes of the movie, however, are akin to the WWII films of Hollywood's Golden Age, complete with impactful images similar to John Wayne storming the beaches at Normandy. *ROGUE ONE* is a fast-paced roller coaster ride for about the last hour.

New to the *STAR WARS* universe are: Felicity Jones as Jyn Erso; Diego Luna as Cassian Andor; Mads Mikkelsen as Galen Erso; Ben Mendelsohn as Orson Krennic; Donnie Yen as Chirrut Imwe; and Forest Whitaker as Saw Gerrera. Jones is quite enjoyable. She is able to play her role realistically, without the absurdities of the Disney's Woman Warrior Agenda. My favorite, though is unquestionably Donnie Yen. Yoda is nowhere to be found, so Yen's Imwe serves as a blend of Yoda and the blind Master Po from TV's *KUNG FU*. His fight scenes are prime, as one would expect, and his non-action scenes are entertaining comic relief. By now, everyone knows Darth Vader makes an appearance, voiced once again by James Earl Jones; and Peter Cushing and Carrie Fisher also appear through CGI characterization. It's nice, but it's easy to tell it's not really them.

### KEY SCENES TO LOOK FOR:

1. **Imwe versus the Imperial Storm Troopers**
2. **Vadar's first appearance**
3. **The climactic battle**

Edward's is set to be the ultimate winner with *ROGUE ONE*, much to the chagrin of *Godzilla* fans. Edwards created one of the better *Godzilla* films with his American version of the King of Monsters. It was so good, it still makes Toho's own follow-up, *SHIN GODZILLA*, look childish. Edwards was set to helm *GODZILLA 2*, and then the remake of *KING KONG VS. GODZILLA*, but withdrew from the projects, principally due to *ROGUE ONE*. Directing in the *STAR WARS* universe is a golden ring Edwards coveted. Additional standalone films are scheduled in the *STAR WARS* saga. Future movies will feature characters such as Han Solo and Boba Fett; just as *Wolverine* had his own series outside of the *X-MEN*. Edwards with the strength of this endeavor must be considered a frontrunner for these films. If *GODZILLA 2* fails under a new director, *Godzilla* fans' screams of outrage will drown the applause from *STAR WARS* fans.

Realistically, the *STAR WARS* franchise was sinking faster than the *Titanic*. After *THE PHANTOM MENACE*, *ATTACK OF THE CLONES*, and *REVENGE OF THE SITH*, even die-hard fans were beginning to suspect they were being duped, just for profit extension. *THE FORCE AWAKENS* proved to be a waste of time and effort, augmenting the series' irrelevance. The franchise needed something to salvage it. Gareth Edwards threw out the life preserver.

## THE GRADE FOR *ROGUE ONE* = B

# Maine's Winter Adventures

By Suzanne Ferrara



"Moo Dawg" and "YoTek" (brothers), New England Dogsledding

One of the most magical experiences of a lifetime is dog sledding, and if you haven't mushed before don't waste any more time... because life is too short.

There are no words that could rightfully describe the awe-inspiring experience of mushing through Maine's Evans Notch. This mountain pass is draped in snow, and with the wind in your face amid the soft beating sound of paws belonging to the happiest dogs alive, traversing these majestic trails is an unforgettable journey.

Once you are dropped into this cinematic scene---on a dog sled---you will not have a care in the world!

As you travel through this spectacular winter wilderness on the Maine/New Hampshire border, mushing as our ancestors did, you will be wowed by the phenomenal athleticism of the New England Dog Sledding team.

New England Dogsledding, is one of the best mushing operations you will find in America, and they are located right

outside the ski town of Bethel, Maine. Many of the company's Alaskan huskies come from the genetic line of Iditarod Sled Dog Race champions, and their parents and great grandparents were lead dogs on those teams that took home the coveted titles.

But even more amazing is how much these sled dogs are loved and humanely treated by their owners Steve Crone and his wife Leonarda (otherwise known as 'Leo'); the love for their canines is beyond transparent and a lesson within itself. Their dogs are family, and Steve and Leo know each by name, are aware of their likes and dislikes, and care for them even when their athletic careers are long gone. (Fun Fact: Because of their genetics, Alaskan huskies are capable of flawlessly running 1000-mile races).

Not all dog sledding trips are created equal. As you mush through this winter wonderland, Crone—in a blink of an eye--points out wildlife and their respective tracks and is chock-full

of fascinating ecological, environmental and wildlife facts. It's a true immersion of this amazing dog sport and flora meets fauna.

Crone who is a guru of his craft and a consummate guide is a mountain ecology expert and was also a down-hill ski racer. His trips engage the emotion of the beauty of nature and the wild and protecting it. On this journey, you may encounter, moose, coyotes, fox and bald eagles. (Fun fact: Crone is a direct descendent of the Pilgrims, and is also part Native American. Be sure to get the fascinating recorded history of his New England ancestors).

There are several dog sledding trips and a series trails offered by New England Dogsledding. You can choose the breath-taking Evan's Notch run within the White Mountain National Forest that crosses into the state of New Hampshire; or embark on a journey through the gorgeous Umbagog Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Crone even offers VIP day

trips which are done at a more leisurely pace and includes a scrumptious packed lunch. In addition, you can opt for a shorter three-hour run, plus you might want to try your hand at driving the dog team yourself with a guide on board!

New England Dogsledding also offers other unique experiences like skijoring (in which a person on skis is pulled by horse, dog or motorized vehicle), horseback and carriage riding, and specialized chariot racing training. (Fun fact: Crone was once featured on 'Good Morning America').

People from around the world partake in a New England Dog Sledding's adventures, and many guests, (including families), take over their historic, no-frills, cozy Telemark Inn Wilderness Lodge nestled in the White Mountains. The rustic, turn-of-the-century polished pine inn once belonged to Prudential Insurance founder (and rubber plantation and refinery owner) Leon Blanchard, and the inside of this Adirondack lodge was built to look like the captain's



New England Dog Sledding

chambers inside Blanchard's ships which transported rubber.

Be sure to take in the views and relax on the 75-foot-long porch or by the cozy mineral stone fireplace. The Crones serve delicious fresh organic meals to their guests, and a stay at the Inn also includes an unforgettable camp fire inside a large 20-foot-in diameter Sioux style tepee; this is a stunning luminary site and lights up like a jack o' lantern. There's no experience like this, sipping wine and discussing the meaning of the day.

While dog sledding is a premier experience around these parts, don't forget you are also in the heart of ski country and the postcard picture-perfect town of Bethel.



Telemark Inn and Wilderness Lodge Teepee



New England Dog Sledding

With original buildings dating back to the 1770s, it's no wonder this authentic New England town looks like one of Grandma Moses' legendary paintings. Bethel, which is a ski town, is one of the oldest villages in western Maine, and its preservation makes you feel as if you stepped back in time. This unique village sits in the lush Androscoggin River Valley, tucked within the Oxford Hills and is surrounded by some of the highest mountains in Maine.

The best way to immerse yourself in this nostalgic town is to take a self-guided walking tour of Bethel Hill Village to see dozens of historically significant structures spanning from 1774 and 1920. Among these buildings is the Bethel Historical Society's Regional History Center, which is housed in the 1821 O'Neil Robinson House and is chock-full of fascinating artifacts of Bethel and the region.

There's one building on this history tour where you can stay overnight just as visitors have been doing for more than a century! From the outside, the charming Bethel Inn Resort looks like it belongs in Norman Rockwell's iconic Home for Christmas painting, but inside the real prize awaits your discovery.

While the Bethel Inn Resort has all the modern amenities you could desire, and the décor is filled with antique pieces and reproductions; in fact, many original furnishings adorn the Inn which boasts the same reservations desk it did when it opened its doors. The Inn offers rooms with a balcony from which you can take in the view of the historical quaint village and the



Telemark Inn and Wilderness Lodge

resort's beautiful grounds.

You can cross country ski on 37 km. of groomed scenic trails, go snowshoeing, ice skate or take a horse drawn sleigh ride on the resort's 200 acres. There's a health club and heated outdoor pool, but for complete relaxation treat yourself to a Swedish massage and custom facial at the Inn's spa where you can melt your cares away.

After a full day, you would have worked up an appetite. The best place to introduce yourself to Bethel's culinary fare, is at the resort's Veranda where you can enjoy succulent steamed Maine lobster and for dessert smores which you can make at your table with a small fire burner.

After a good night's rest, you'll be ready for two things: the hearty Maine breakfast buffet at the resort and taking on the slopes. Hop aboard the complimentary Mountain Explorer shuttle bus and head to the renowned Sunday River Ski Resort for some awesome Alpine-scale skiing. There are eight peaks with varied terrain and trails, and there's also night skiing available.

(Big Tip: Want all the ski clothing you need waiting for you at

your hotel? Getoutfitted.com will cover you and your family from-head to toe with their quality name brand ski outfit rentals sent directly to your hotel. When you are done place the items in the convenient pre-paid Getoutfitted bags and drop it in the mail.)

You'll be hungry after hitting the Maine slopes, make a beeline straight to Sunday River's South Ridge Lodge for one of the best Lobster Rolls you will ever eat! You will find this delicious Maine delicacy at the Coffee Hound Coffee Bar. Owners Chris and Jen Keegan are beyond passionate about their mouthwatering coffee creations and lobster rolls, the latter of which is 'Grammy Keegan's secret recipe'.

For dinner, be sure not to miss Aerosmith's Joey Kramer's Rockin' & Roastin' Café and Restaurant right outside Sunday River Ski Resort. You will feel as if you have walked into a live rock concert. Fun Aerosmith-themed offerings include 'Livin' on a Wedge' and 'Janie's Got a Bun'.

For more information go to [www.newenglanddogsledding.com](http://www.newenglanddogsledding.com), [www.bethelmaine.com](http://www.bethelmaine.com), and [www.sundayriver.com](http://www.sundayriver.com).

## 86 Year Old Checkup

An 86-year-old man went to his doctor for his quarterly check-up. The doctor asked him how he was feeling, and the 86-year-old said, things are great and I've never felt better. I now have a 20 year-old bride who is pregnant with my child. "So what do you think about that Doc?" The doctor considered his question for a minute and then began to tell a story. "I have an older friend, much like you, who is an avid hunter and never misses a season. One day he was setting off to go hunting. In a bit of a hurry, he accidentally picked up his walking cane instead of his gun." "As he neared a lake, he came across a very large male beaver sitting at the water's edge. He realized he'd left his gun at home and so he couldn't shoot the magnificent creature. Out of habit he raised his cane, aimed it at the animal as if it were his favorite hunting rifle and went 'bang, bang'." "Miraculously, two shots rang out and the bear fell over dead. Now, what do you think of that?" asked the doctor. The 86-year-old said, "Logic would strongly suggest that somebody else pumped a couple of rounds into that bear." The doctor replied, "My point exactly."

## Apple does it again!

Apple announced today that it has developed a breast implant that can store and play music. The iBoob will cost from \$4990 to

\$6990, depending on cup and speaker size. This is considered a major social breakthrough, because women are always complaining about men staring at their breasts and not listening to them.

## The Queen & Dolly Go To Heaven !!

Queen Elizabeth and Dolly Parton die on the same day and they both go before an angel to find out if they'll be admitted to Heaven. Unfortunately, there's only one space left that day, so the Angel must decide which of them gets in. The Angel asks Dolly if there's some particular reason why she should go to Heaven. Dolly takes off her top and says, 'Look at these, they're the most perfect breasts God ever created, and I'm sure it will please God to be able to see them every day, for eternity.' The Angel thanks Dolly, and asks Her Majesty the same question. The Queen takes a bottle of Perrier out of her purse, drinks it down. Then, wees into the loo and pulls the lever. The Angel says, 'OK, your Majesty, you may go in.' Dolly is outraged and asks, 'What was that all about? I show you two of God's own perfect creations and you turn me down. She wees into a toilet and she gets in! Can you explain that to me?' "Sorry, Dolly," says the Angel, 'but even in Heaven, a royal flush beats a pair - no matter how big they are.'

## Christmas Trivia Quiz

1. What American state was the first to make Christmas an official holiday?
  - a. Connecticut
  - b. Alabama
  - c. Alaska
  - d. North Carolina
2. What is the shape of the candy cane modeled after?
  - a. A fish hook
  - b. A constellation of stars
  - c. The cane St. Nicholas used
  - d. A Sheppard's crook
3. What was the name of the dog that belonged to the Grinch in Dr. Seuss' book "How the Grinch Stole Christmas"?
  - a. Rudolph
  - b. Toto
  - c. Max
  - d. Cerberus



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4. Which star led the Three Kings to Jesus?
  - a. Star of David
  - b. North Star
  - c. Star of Bethlehem
  - d. Angel Star
  
5. What was the name of Scrooges' dead business partner in "A Christmas Carol"?
  - a. Jacob Marley
  - b. Bob Cratchit
  - c. Tiny Tim
  - d. Bill Sykes
  
6. Where did the real St. Nicholas live?
  - a. In Holland
  - b. At the North Pole
  - c. In Turkey
  - d. In Germany
  
7. What brought Frosty the Snowman to life?
  - a. Pixie Dust
  - b. An old silk hat
  - c. A kiss
  - d. A fresh snowfall
  
8. When you go Wassailing, what is it that you are doing?
  - a. Giving out gifts to your friends & neighbors
  - b. Going out in the woods to cut down your Christmas tree
  - c. Challenging as many of your neighbors as you can to a snowball fight
  - d. Going to visit neighbors and receiving goodies!
  
9. In the movie "It's A Wonderful Life" how do you know that an angel has received his wings?
  - a. A light flashes
  - b. It starts raining
  - c. A trumpet sounds
  - d. A bell rings
  
10. Who was the author of "A Christmas Carol"?
  - a. Hans Christian Anderson
  - b. Charles Dickens
  - c. Thomas M. Sawyer
  - d. Mark Twain
  
11. What was pictured on the first stamp printed for the Christmas season?
  - a. Santa Claus
  - b. An Angel
  - c. A Star
  - d. A Rose
  
12. The poem commonly known as "The Night Before Christmas" was originally titled:
  - a. The Night Before Christmas
  - b. Santa Claus is Coming to Town
  - c. A Visit From Saint Nicholas
  - d. The Night Visitor
  
13. Electric Christmas tree lights were first used in what year?
  - a. 1925
  - b. 1700
  - c. 1895
  - d. 1750

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14. At Christmas, it is customary to exchange kisses beneath a sprig of which plant?
- Holly
  - Mistletoe
  - Ivy
  - Pine
15. Which of these events did NOT occur on Christmas Day?
- Hong Kong fell to the Japanese in WWII.
  - Ebenezer Scrooge was visited by four ghosts.
  - King Arthur pulled Excalibur from the stone.
  - Charlemagne was crowned Holy Roman Emperor.
16. In Tchaikovsky's ballet The Nutcracker, the nutcracker's main enemy is:
- A girl named Clara.
  - The King of Mice.
  - Drosselmeyer the Magician.
  - Dr. Almond
17. Good King Wenceslas was king of which country?
- Hungary
  - Bohemia
  - Poland
  - Czechoslovakia
18. When was Christmas first celebrated?
- The year after Jesus was crucified
  - Around 100 AD
  - In the 4th Century
  - 1935
19. Why was December 25th chosen as Christmas Day?
- That's when Jesus was born
  - To compete with a pagan celebration
  - That's when Christmas trees are in season
  - That's when the Bible says to celebrate it
20. What country did poinsettias originally come from?
- The U.S.
  - Cuba
  - Mexico
  - Brazil
21. How did Xmas originate as an abbreviation for Christmas?
- Atheists refused to accept "Christ" as part of the word
  - The early popes were lazy so they tended to shorten everything
  - The Greek word for Christ is Xristos
  - From Latin terminology for any holy day
22. How many reindeer does Santa Claus have?
- Santa has eight reindeer.
  - Santa has nine reindeer.
  - Santa does not have reindeer. They are really caribou.
  - Santa has a whole herd of reindeer-- we only know about his favorite ones.
23. What comes after '8 maids a-milking' in the song 'The 12 Days of Christmas'?
- 9 pipers piping
  - 9 lords a-leaping
  - 9 drummers drumming
  - 9 ladies dancing
24. When are the '12 Days of Christmas'?
- The 12 days before Christmas: December 14 to December 25
  - The 12 days after Christmas: December 26 to January 6
  - The 12 days around Christmas: Christmas Eve to January 4
  - The 12 days beginning with the winter solstice: December



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25. Which of the following holidays DOES NOT occur in

December?

- a. Candlemas
- b. Kwanzaa
- c. Feast of St. Nicholas
- d. Boxing Day

26. Santa's only female sleigh-pulling reindeer, Vixen, has antlers.

True or false?

- a. False. Only the male reindeer have antlers.
- b. True. Both male and female reindeer have antlers.
- c. True. But they are really no bigger than slight bumps on their heads.
- d. False. Some females have been known to have antlers,

but

that is extremely rare.

27. How many sides does a snowflake have?

- a. 6
- b. 8
- c. 10
- d. 12

28. What is the most popular holiday plant decoration in the United States?

- a. Pine branches or evergreen boughs
- b. Mistletoe
- c. Holly
- d. Poinsettia

29. In the movie 'Miracle on 34th Street', Kris Kringle is hired to play Santa Claus in what large department store?

- a. Marshall Field's
- b. FAO Schwarz
- c. Macy's
- d. Gimble's

30. Speaking of 'Good King Wenceslas'... he looked out 'on the Feast of Stephen'. When is the 'Feast of Stephen'?

- a. December 6
- b. December 12
- c. December 26
- d. January 6

- ANSWERS:
- |        |        |
|--------|--------|
| 16 - b |        |
| 1 - b  | 17 - b |
| 2 - d  | 18 - c |
| 3 - c  | 19 - b |
| 4 - c  | 20 - c |
| 5 - a  | 21 - c |
| 6 - c  | 22 - d |
| 7 - b  | 23 - d |
| 8 - d  | 24 - b |
| 9 - d  | 25 - a |
| 10 - b | 26 - b |
| 11 - d | 27 - a |
| 12 - c | 28 - d |
| 13 - c | 29 - c |
| 14 - b | 30 - c |
| 15 - b |        |

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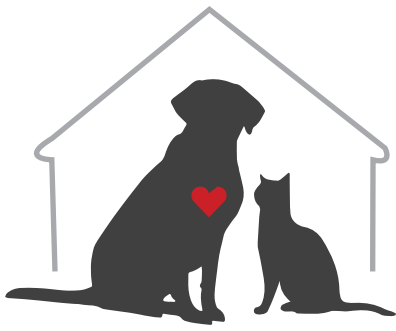
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## Christmas Trivia Challenge

1. What relation was the Christ Child to John the Baptist?  
-- Closer than second cousin. Luke tells us John's mother Elizabeth was Mary's cousin.
2. Who was the Roman emperor when Christ was born?  
-- Caesar Augustus.
3. Which emperor is credited with standardizing Dec. 25 as Christmas Day?  
-- Constantine in 325 A.D.
4. Mary and Joseph journeyed from Nazareth to Bethlehem to be enrolled in the imperial census. How many miles is that?  
-- They journeyed 92.5 miles.
5. Where did the Grinch steal Christmas?  
-- In Whoville.
6. What family tradition did President Franklin Roosevelt insist on performing every Christmas Eve?  
-- Sitting beside the fire, he read aloud the Dickens classic "A Christmas Carol," exuberantly acting out all the parts.
7. In Truman Capote's "A Christmas Memory" what identical gift was bestowed on the bootlegger, the bus driver, the knife grinder, two Baptist missionaries in Borneo and the president of the United States?  
-- A Christmas fruit cake.
8. What was True Love's gift on the second day of Christmas?  
-- "Two turtle doves and a partridge in a pear tree."
9. What did Harry Potter get for Christmas in his first semester at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry?  
-- An "invisibility cloak."
10. Did Norman Rockwell ever paint Grandma Moses?  
-- Yes. He depicted Grandma Moses among the friends and family greeting a boy returning from college in "Christmas Homecoming," a 1948 Saturday Evening Post cover.
11. What historic event heightened holiday spirits in Berlin a decade ago?  
-- The fall of the Berlin wall.
12. Which newspaper assured a reader: "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus?"  
-- The New York Sun. A famous editorial on Sept. 21, 1897, by Francis P. Church answered a letter by 8-year-old Virginia O'Hanlon. The paper ceased publication in 1950.
13. Why do we kiss under the mistletoe?  
-- The ancient Norse associated mistletoe with their goddess of love.
14. What is holly's symbolic meaning to Christians?  
-- To Christians, the berries are symbolic of Christ's blood, and the thorny leaves suggest the thorns in His crown.
15. Who started the American tradition of poinsettia at Christmas?



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*Male - 2 Years - Great Dane*



*Ava*

*Female - 1 Years - Hound Mix*



*Ellie*

*Male - 2 Years - Spaniel/Poodle Mix*

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-- Dr Joel Poinsett, the first US ambassador to Mexico, brought the plant back in 1828. Mexicans had long revered poinsettia because it resembled the Star of Bethlehem.

16. True or false: The New England Puritans forbade Christmas celebrations.

-- True. The Puritans considered Christmas trees and decorations to be pagan, and outlawed them in Massachusetts until 1859.

17. Thanksgiving has traditionally been the start of the Christmas season in the U.S. Which U.S. President moved Thanksgiving back a week to extend the holiday shopping season?

-- Franklin Delano Roosevelt, in a move to help out Depression-strained retailers. Since 1859 Thanksgiving had been celebrated on Nov. 30, but in 1939 FDR declared the holiday to be the fourth Thursday in November (Nov. 23 of that year). Two years later, FDR signed a bill making the move permanent and official.

18. True or false: The date of Christ's birth is noted in the Book of Matthew in the New Testament.

-- False. The Bible never mentions a specific date for the Nativity.

19. What contribution to the Santa legend did New York ad writer Robert May make in 1939?

-- Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer. May wrote the lyrics as copy for a Montgomery Ward department store giveaway. In 1947 it was set to music, and recorded by Gene Autrey.

20. In what Broadway musical was the song "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" introduced?

-- Meet Me in St. Louis". Judy Garland sang the song in the film version.

21. What auspicious television event occurred in December 1965?

-- "Charlie Brown Christmas" debuted on CBS. One of the very first animated Christmas TV specials, the show has aired every Christmas since.

22. What auspicious television event occurred on December 24, 1968?

-- After achieving the first manned lunar orbit, the crew of Apollo 8 celebrated Christmas Eve by reading from the first chapter of the Book of Genesis. The event was broadcast around the world.

23. What legendary actor narrated the TV special "How the Grinch Stole Christmas?"

-- Boris Karloff, star of "Frankenstein" and other horror classics.

24. What do the songs "Jingle Bells", "Winter Wonderland", and "Sleigh ride" have in common?

-- None of these songs mentions Christmas.

25. Why is "O, Come All Ye Faithful" a Christmas carol but "Deck the Halls" not?

-- A true Christmas carol has to have a religious theme.

25. The state songs of Maryland and Michigan use the melody of what popular Christmas song?

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# Humor

-- -- "O Tannenbaum"

26. What Christmas song was introduced in the 1942 movie "Holiday Inn" ... and was almost cut out of the final version?

-- Bing Crosby's "White Christmas" -- one of the most popular songs of all time. The movie "White Christmas", starring Crosby and Danny Kaye, didn't debut until 1954. It was the first movie to be made in Vista Vision, a deep-focus process.

27. Who sang "I saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus?"

-- Child singer Jimmy Boyd was 12 years and 11 months old when he sang the Christmas favorite, "I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus." The song hit the top of the pop charts.

28. In which year was Queen Elizabeth's Christmas message to the nation first televised?

-- Queen Elizabeth's Christmas message to the nation was televised for the first time on December 25, 1957.

29. Where is Christmas Island?

-- Formally called Kiritimati, Christmas Island is in the Indian Ocean.

30. True or false: America has an "official" Christmas tree.

-- True. America's official national Christmas tree is located in King's Canyon National Park in California. The tree, a giant

sequoia called the "General Grant Tree," is over 300 feet high. It was made the official Christmas tree in 1925.

33. True or false: More diamonds are sold at Christmas time than at Valentine's Day.

-- True. More diamonds are purchased at Christmas -time (31 percent) than during any other holiday or occasion during the year.

34. What was so unusual about the Christmas season of 1989 in Eastern Europe?

-- On Christmas Day, 1989, Eastern Europe was permitted to celebrate Christmas freely and openly for the first time in decades. Church masses were broadcast live for the first time in history.

35. In what year did Toys for Tots start making the holidays a little happier for children?

-- In 1947, Toys for Tots started making the holidays a little happier for children by organizing its first Christmas toy drive for needy youngsters.

36. When and where did the Salvation Army Christmas collection kettle originate?

-- In an effort to solicit cash to pay for a charity Christmas



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dinner in 1891, a large crab pot was set down on a San Francisco street, becoming the first Salvation Army collection kettle.

### Ten Thoughts to Ponder

Number 9: Life is sexually transmitted.

Number 8: Good health is merely the slowest possible rate at which one can die.

Number 7: Give a person a fish and you feed them for a day. Teach a person to use the Internet and they won't bother you for weeks.

Number 6: Some people are like a Slinky-not really good for anything, but you still can't help but smile when you shove them down the stairs.

Number 5: Health nuts are going to feel stupid someday, lying in hospitals, dying of nothing.

Number 4: All of us could take a lesson from the weather. It

pays no attention to criticism.

Number 3: Why does a slight tax increase cost you \$800.00, and a substantial tax cut saves you \$30.00?

Number 2: In the 60's, people took acid to make the world weird. Now the world is weird and people take Prozac to make it normal.

And The Number 1 Thought: Life is like a jar of Jalapeno peppers--what you do today, might burn you're a\*\* tomorrow.

--- and as someone recently said to me: "Don't worry about old age--it doesn't last long."

### The Elderly Irish Virgin!!!

In a tiny village on the Irish coast lived an old lady, a virgin and very proud of it. Sensing that her final days were rapidly



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approaching, and desiring to make sure everything was in proper order when she died, she went to the town's undertaker (who also happened to be the local postal clerk) to make proper 'final' arrangements. As a last wish, she informed the undertaker that she wanted the following inscription engraved on her tombstone: 'BORN A VIRGIN, LIVED AS A VIRGIN, DIED A VIRGIN' Not long after, the old maid died peacefully. A few days after the funeral, as the undertaker-- postal clerk went to prepare the tombstone that the lady had requested, It became quite apparent that the tombstone that she had selected was much too small for the wording that she had chosen. He thought long and hard about how he could fulfill the old maid's final request, considering the very limited space available on the small piece of stone. For days, he agonized over the dilemma. But finally his experience as a postal worker allowed him to come up with what he thought was the appropriate solution to the problem. The virgin's tombstone was finally completed and duly engraved, and it read as follows: 'RETURNED UNOPENED'

## Red Tomatoes

A beautiful woman loved growing tomatoes, but couldn't seem to get her tomatoes to turn red. One day, while taking a stroll, she came upon a neighbor who had the most beautiful garden full of huge red tomatoes. The woman asked the man, "What do you do to get your tomatoes so red?" The man responded, "Well, twice a day I stand in front of my tomato garden naked in my trench coat and flash them. My tomatoes turn red from blushing so much." Well, the woman was so impressed; she decided to try doing the same thing to her tomato garden to see if it would work. So twice a day for two weeks she flashed her garden hoping for the best. One day the man was passing by and asked the woman, "By the way, how did you make out? Did your tomatoes turn red?" "No", she replied, "but my cucumbers are enormous."

## The Man Rules

At last a guy has taken the time to write this all down. We always hear " the rules " From the female side. Now here are the rules from the male side. These are our rules! Please note.. these are all numbered "1 " ON PURPOSE!

- Men are NOT mind readers.  
FIRST & FOREMOST RULE
- Learn to work the toilet seat.  
You're a big girl. If it's up, put it down.  
We need it up, you need it down.  
You don't hear us complaining about you leaving it down.

- Sunday sports, It's like the full moon or the changing of the tides. Let it be.
- Crying is blackmail.
- Ask for what you want.  
Let us be clear on this one:  
Subtle hints do not work!  
Strong hints do not work!  
Obvious hints do not work!  
Just say it!
- Yes and No are perfectly acceptable answers to almost every question.
- Come to us with a problem only if you want help solving it.  
That's what we do. Sympathy is what your girlfriends are for.
- Anything we said 6 months ago is inadmissible in an argument.  
In fact, all comments become Null and void after 7 Days.
- If you think you're fat, you probably are.  
Don't ask us.
- If something we said can be interpreted two ways and one of the ways makes you sad or angry, we meant the other one
- \*\*\* • You can either ask us to do something  
Or tell us how you want it done. Not both.  
If you already know best how to do it , just do it yourself.
- Whenever possible, Please say whatever you have to say during commercials...
- Christopher Columbus did NOT need directions and neither do we.
- ALL men see in only 16 colors, like Windows default settings.  
Peach, for example, is a fruit, not A color. Pumpkin is also a fruit. We have no idea what mauve is.
- If it itches, it will be scratched.  
We do that.
- If we ask what is wrong and you say "nothing," We will act like nothing's wrong. We know you are lying, but it is just not worth the hassle.

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- If you ask a question you don't want an answer to, Expect an answer you don't want to hear.
- When we have to go somewhere, absolutely anything you wear is fine.... Really .
- Don't ask us what we're thinking about unless you are prepared to discuss such topics as Football or Hockey.
- You have enough clothes.
- You have too many shoes.
- I am in shape. Round IS a shape!
- Thank you for reading this.  
Yes, I know, I have to sleep on the couch tonight;  
But did you know men really don't mind that? It's like camping.

### Understandable Example of Stimulus Package

It is a slow day in the small Saskatchewan town of Pumphandle, and streets are deserted. Times are tough, everybody is in debt, and everybody is living on credit. A tourist visiting the area

drives through town, stops at the motel, and lays a \$100 bill on the desk saying he wants to inspect the rooms upstairs to pick one for the night. As soon as he walks upstairs, the motel owner grabs the bill and runs next door to pay his debt to the butcher. The butcher takes the \$100 and runs down the street to retire his debt to the pig farmer. The pig farmer takes the \$100 and heads off to pay his bill to his supplier, the Co-op. The guy at the Co-op takes the \$100 and runs to pay his debt to the local prostitute, who has also been facing hard times and has had to offer her "services" on credit. The hooker rushes to the hotel and pays off her room bill with the hotel owner. The hotel proprietor then places the \$100 back on the counter so the traveler will not suspect anything. At that moment the traveler comes down the stairs, states that the rooms are not satisfactory, picks up the \$100 bill and leaves. No one produced anything. No one earned anything. However, the whole town is now out of debt and looks to the future with a lot more optimism. And that, ladies and gentlemen, is how a Stimulus package works.

### Difference Between Grandpa & Grandma

This is funny even if you are not a grandparent. Have you ever wondered what the difference is between grandmothers and grandfathers? Well here is one way. Every Sunday morning my friend would take his 7-year old granddaughter out for a drive

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for some bonding time. One particular Sunday however, he had a bad cold and really didn't feel like being up at all. Luckily, his wife came to the rescue and said that she would take their granddaughter out. When they returned, the little girl anxiously ran to see her grandfather. 'Well, did you enjoy your ride with grandma?' 'Oh Yes, grandpa', the girl replied 'and do you know what? We didn't see a single idiot, dumb bunny, dip stick, stupid moron or horse's behind anywhere we went today!' Almost brings a tear to your eye, doesn't it?

### Adam and Eve

Adam stayed out very late for a few nights and Eve became upset. "You're running around with other women," she charged. "You're being unreasonable," Adam responded. "You're the only woman on earth." The quarrel continued until Adam fell asleep, only to be awakened by someone poking him in the chest. It was Eve. "What do you think you're doing?" Adam demanded. "Counting your ribs," said Eve.

### Senior Health Care Solution – According to Maxine

So you're a sick senior citizen and the government says there is no nursing home available for you – what do you do? Our

plan give anyone 65 years or older a gun and 4 bullets. You are allowed to shoot 4 people – not necessarily dead! Of course, this means you will be sent to prison where you will get 3 meals a day, a roof over your head, central heating, and all the health care you need! New teeth, no problem. Need glasses, great. New hip, knees, kidney, lungs, heart? All covered. (And your kids can come and visit you as often as they do now.) And who will be paying for all of this? The same government that just told you they cannot afford for you to go into a home. Plus, because you are a prisoner, you don't have to pay any income taxes anymore. Is this country great or what?

### World's Shortest Books:

---

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by Bill Gates

---

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MY PLAN TO FIND THE REAL KILLERS

by O. J. Simpson

### Millennial's

Recently, when I went to McDonald's I saw on the menu that you could have an order of 6, 9 or 12 Chicken McNuggets. I asked for a half dozen nuggets. 'We don't have half dozen nuggets,' said the teenager at the counter. 'You don't?' I replied. 'We only have six, nine, or twelve,' was the reply. 'So I can't order a half dozen nuggets, but I can order six?' 'That's right.' So I shook my head and ordered six McNuggets. (Unbelievable but sadly true...)

I was checking out at the local Wal-Mart with just a few items and the lady behind me put her things on the belt close to mine.

I picked up one of those 'dividers' that they keep by the cash register and placed it between our things so they wouldn't get mixed. After the girl had scanned all of my items, she picked up the 'divider', looking it all over for the bar code so she could scan it. Not finding the bar code, she said to me, 'Do you know how much this is?' I said to her 'I've changed my mind; I don't think I'll buy that today.' She said 'OK,' and I paid her for the things and left. She had no clue to what had just happened.

I recently saw a distraught young lady weeping beside her car. 'Do you need some help?' I asked. She replied, 'I knew I should have replaced the battery to this remote door unlock. Now I can't get into my car. Do you think they (pointing to a distant convenience store) would have a battery to fit this?' 'Hmmm, I don't know. Do you have an alarm, too?' I asked. 'No, just this remote thingy,' she answered, handing it and the car keys to me. As I took the key and manually unlocked the door, I replied, 'Why don't you drive over there and check about the batteries. It's a long walk....'

Several years ago, we had an Intern who was none too swift. One day she was typing and turned to a secretary and said, 'I'm almost out of typing paper. What do I do?' 'Just use paper from the photocopier', the secretary told her. With that, the intern took her

last remaining blank piece of paper, put it on the photocopier and proceeded to make five 'blank' copies.

-----

A mother calls 911 very worried asking the dispatcher if she needs to take her kid to the emergency room, the kid had eaten ants. The dispatcher tells her to give the kid some Benadryl and he should be fine, the mother says, 'I just gave him some ant killer.....' Dispatcher: 'Rush him in to emergency!' Life is tough. It's even tougher if you're stupid!!!!

### Perks of reaching 50 or being over 60 and heading towards 70!

01. Kidnappers are not very interested in you.
02. In a hostage situation you are likely to be released first.
03. No one expects you to run--anywhere.
04. People call at 9 PM and ask, "did I wake you?"
05. People no longer view you as a hypochondriac.
  
06. There is nothing left to learn the hard way.
07. Things you buy now won't wear out.
08. You can eat supper at 4 PM.

10. You get into heated arguments about pension plans.
11. You no longer think of speed limits as a challenge.
12. You quit trying to hold your stomach in no matter who walks into the room.
13. You sing along with elevator music.
14. Your eyes won't get much worse.
15. Your investment in health insurance is finally beginning to pay off.
16. Your joints are more accurate meteorologists than the national weather service.
17. Your secrets are safe with your friends because they can't remember them either.
18. Your supply of brain cells is finally down to manageable size.
19. You can't remember where you read this list.
20. And you notice these are all in Big Print for your convenience.

### No One Believes Seniors

### An elderly couple

An elderly couple was celebrating their sixtieth anniversary. They married as childhood sweethearts and moved back to their old neighborhood after they retired. Holding hands, they

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entered, and found the old desk they'd shared where Andy had carved, 'I love you Sally'. On their way back home, a bag of money fell out of an armored car, practically landing at their feet. Sally quickly picked it up and, not sure what to do with it, they took it home. There, she counted the money - fifty thousand dollars! Andy said, "We've got to give it back." Sally said, "Finders keepers." She put the money back in the bag and hid it in their attic. The next day, two police officers were canvassing the neighborhood looking for the money, and knocked on their door. "Pardon me, did either of you find a bag that fell out of an armored car yesterday?" Sally said, "No." Andy said, "She's lying. She hid it up in the attic." Sally said, "Don't believe him, he's getting senile" The agents turned to Andy and began to question him. One said, "Tell us the story from the beginning". Andy replied, "Well, when Sally and I were walking home from school yesterday..." The first police officer turned to his partner and said, "Were outta here!"

### For the Girls:

All of us girls.. Old and young... Near and far... Hold special memories of good times we've shared. We've all had our share of hard times when our friends were there to make us feel better.

We've shared... Our hearts - Our time - Our secrets - Our fears - Our hopes - And our dreams. Let us never forget our girlfriends!

Remember: Someone will always be prettier. Someone will always be smarter.

Their house will be bigger. They will drive a better car. Their children will do better in school. And their husband will fix more things around the house. So let it go, be Happy! And love yourself and your circumstances. Think about it. The

prettiest woman in the world can have trouble in her heart. And the most highly favored woman on your job may be unable to have children. And the richest woman you know, she's got the car, the house, the clothes...but she might be lonely. And the Word says 'If I have not Love, I have nothing.' So, again, love you. Love who you are. Look in the mirror in every morning, smile and say 'I am too blessed to be stressed too anointed to be disappointed!' I like that! 'Winners make things happen. Losers let things happen' Be Blessed ladies and share this to help encourage and empower another woman. 'To the world you might be one person, but to one person you just might be the world.'

### Law of the Garbage Truck

One day I hopped in a taxi and we took off for the airport. We were driving in the right lane when suddenly a black car jumped out of a parking space right in front of us. My taxi driver slammed on his brakes, skidded, and missed the other car by just inches! The driver of the other car whipped his head around and started yelling at us. My taxi driver just smiled and waved at the guy. I mean, he was really friendly. So I asked, 'Why did you just do that? This guy almost ruined your car and sent us to the hospital!' This is when my taxi driver taught me what I now call, 'The Law of the Garbage Truck.' He explained that many people are like garbage trucks. They run around full of garbage, full of frustration, full of anger, and full of disappointment. As their garbage piles up, they need a place to dump it and sometimes they'll dump it on you. Don't take it personally. Just smile, wave, wish them well, and move on. Don't take their garbage and spread it to other people at work, at home, or on the streets. The bottom line is that successful people do not let garbage trucks take over their day. Life's too short to wake up in the morning



with regrets, so .... Love the people who treat you right. Pray for the ones who don't. Life is ten percent what you make it and ninety percent how you take it!  
Have a garbage-free day!

### **An Old Nun**

An old nun who was living in a convent next to a construction site noticed the coarse language of the workers and decided to spend some time with them to correct their ways. She decided she would take her lunch, sit with the workers, and talk with them. She put her sandwich in a brown bag and walked over to the spot where the men were eating. Sporting a big smile, she walked up to the group and asked, "And do you men know Jesus Christ?" They shook their heads and looked at each other very confused. One of the workers looked up into the steelworks and yelled out, "Anybody up there know Jesus Christ?" One of the steelworkers yelled down, "Why?" The worker yelled back, "'Cause his wife's here with his lunch."

### **The Italian Secret of a Long Marriage**

At Saint Mary's Catholic Church in South Philly they have a weekly husband's only marriage seminar. At the session last week, the Priest asked Luigi, who was approaching his 50th wedding anniversary, to take a few minutes and share some insight into how he had managed to stay married to the same woman all these years. Luigi replied to the assembled husbands, "Wella, I've a-ried to treat-a her nizza, spenda money on her, but besta of all is that I tooka her to Italy for the 20th anniversary!" The Priest responded "Luigi, you are an amazing inspiration to all the husbands here! Please tell us what you are planning for your wife for your 50th Anniversary.?" Luigi proudly replied, "I'm agonna go get her."

### **New Year's Eve One Liners**

A New Year's resolution is something that goes in one year and out the other.

My new year's resolution is to be more optimistic by keeping my cup half-full with either rum, vodka, or whiskey.

New Years Eve is the only acceptable time to wear body glitter without being mistaken for a stripper.

My New Years resolution is 10:80pm I'm getting drunk just thinking about tomorrow night.

My New Year's resolution is to stop hanging out with people who ask me about my New Year's resolutions.



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If your born in September, its pretty safe to assume your parents started out the New Year with a Bang! I have only one resolution. To rediscover the difference between wants and needs. May I have all I need and want all I have. Happy New Year!

If 2017 was a person, I'd sue him for pain and suffering and lost wages.

This New Year's I resolve to be less awesome since that is really the only thing I do in excess.

People treat New Year's like some sort of life-changing event. If your life sucked last year, it's probably still going to suck tomorrow.

I'll remember 2016 like it was yesterday

Dear Luck, .....can we be friends in 2017 Please?

In 2017, may your neighbors respect you, troubles neglect you, angels protect you, and heaven accept you. May all your troubles last as long as your New Year resolutions.

I hereby resolve not to catch fire while riding a flaming hoverboard....again.

Dear God, my prayer for 2017 is a FAT bank account and a THIN body. Please don't mix it up like you did this year.

I want to get so drunk that if vampires bit my neck they'd get a Bloody Mary.

Remember you can reset your resolutions on January 14th (Orthodox New Year) and February 8th (Chinese New Year). After that, even I can't help you.

I wanna kiss you on December 31st from 11:59 pm to 12:01 am, so I can have an amazing ending to 2016 and a beautiful beginning into 2017.

Many things can be preserved in alcohol this New Year's Eve. DIGNITY is not one of them.

Every year I make a resolution to change myself..... this year



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making a resolution to be myself!

I'm planning on finding new and interesting things to hate about my job in 2017.

Just heard that in 2017 there will be a new device that can turn thoughts into speech. I have had that for years, it's called alcohol.

My New Year's Resolution is to break my New Year's Resolutions....That way I succeed at something!

Anyone who says that alcohol is a depressant isn't drinking enough of it.

Keep the smile, Leave the tear, Hold the laugh, Leave the pain, Think of joy, Forget the fear. Be joyous, cause its a New Year.

New Year's is just a holiday created by calendar companies who don't want you reusing last year's calendar.

I'm actually feeling pretty okay about not accomplishing anything this year.

My 2017 resolution is for everyone else to gain the 50 pounds I refuse to lose.

People think New Years is a life changing event. If your life sucked last year, it's probably still going to suck tomorrow.

### New Years Eve Short Jokes

What do you tell someone you didn't see at New Year's Eve? I haven't seen you for a year!

What happened to the Irish man who thought about the evils of drinking in the New Year? He gave up thinking.

What's the problem with jogging on New Years Eve? The ice falls out of your drinks!

What do you call always wanting a date for New Year's Eve? Social Security

New Years Eve forecast: Mostly drunk with a slight chance of passing out.



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What happens every year when the Time Square Ball drops?  
Justin Bieber gets jealous

Knock Knock! Whos there? Mary and Abby! Mary and Abby who?  
Mary Christmas and a Abby New Year.

### **New Years Eve**

On New Year's Eve, Marilyn stood up in the local pub and said that it was time to get ready. At the stroke of midnight, she wanted every husband to be standing next to the one person who made his life worth living. Well, it was kind of embarrassing. As the clock struck, the bartender was almost crushed to death.

### **New Year's Resolutions You Have No Chance At Keeping**

When I hear a funny joke I will not reply, "LOL, LMAO, or ROTFLMAO!"

- Start using Facebook for something other than Farmville and stupid quizzes.
- I will try to figure out why I "really" need 5 facebook accounts.
- I resolve to work with neglected children... my own.
- Lose 20 pounds by going to the gym!
- I will stop using, "So, what's your URL?" as a pickup line.
- I will spend less than five hour a day on the Internet.
- I will read the manual... just as soon as I can find it.
- Spend less than \$1000 for coffee at Starbucks this year.
- Lose weight by inventing an anti-gravity machine.
- Stop repeating myself again, and again, and again.
- I will stop tagging pictures of myself in pictures even when I'm not in them.
- I will think of a password other than "password".

### **New Year's Resolutions You Can Actually Keep**

- Read less.
- I want to gain weight.
- Put on at least 30 pounds.
- I will start buying lottery tickets at a luckier store
- Stop exercising. Waste of time.
- Watch more TV. I've been missing some good stuff.
- Watch less T.V. in standard definition.
- Gain enough weight to get on The Biggest Loser.
- Watch more movie remakes.

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- Start washing my hands after I use the restroom.
- Procrastinate more.
- I will do less laundry and use more deodorant.
- I will become a vegan for a day and subsequently learn that it was a missed steak.
- I will no longer waste my time relieving the past, instead I will spend it worrying about the future.
- Drink. Drink some more.
- Stop buying worthless junk on Ebay, because QVC has better specials.
- Start being superstitious.
- Spend more time at work.
- Stop bringing lunch from home: I should eat out more.
- Take up a new habit: maybe smoking!

## Excess Billing Hours

A lawyer died and arrived at the pearly gates. To his dismay, there were thousands of people ahead of him in line to see St. Peter. But, to his surprise, St. Peter left his desk at the gate and came down the long line to where the lawyer was standing. St. Peter greeted him warmly. Then St. Peter and one of his assistants took the lawyer by the hands and guided him up to the front of the line into a comfortable chair by his desk. The lawyer said, "I don't mind all this attention, but what makes me so special?" St. Peter replied, "Well, I've added up all the hours for which you billed your clients, and by my calculation you must be about 193 years old!"

## Ounces of Brain for Sale

A man went to a brain store to get some brain to complete a study. He sees a sign remarking on the quality of professional brain offered at this particular brain store. He begins to question the butcher about the cost of these brains. "How much does it cost for engineer brain?" "Three dollars an ounce." "How much does it cost for programmer brain?" "Four dollars an ounce." "How much for lawyer brain?" "\$1,000 an ounce." "Why is lawyer brain so much more?" "Do you know how many lawyers we had to kill to get one ounce of brain?"

## What Type of Tracks?

Two lawyers were out hunting when they came upon a couple of tracks. After close examination, the first lawyer declared them to be deer tracks. The second lawyer disagreed, insisting they must be elk tracks. They were still arguing when the train hit them.

## Lawyers Give Irrelevant Information

Two women are on a transcontinental balloon voyage. Their craft is engulfed in fog, their compass gone awry. Afraid of landing in the ocean, they drift for days. Suddenly, the clouds part to show a sunlit meadow below. As they descend, they see a man walking his dog. One of the flyers yells to the figure far below, "Where are we?" The man yells back, "About a half mile from town." Once again, the balloonists are engulfed in the mist. One flyer says to the other, "He must have been a lawyer." The other says, "A lawyer! How do you know that?" The first says, "That's easy. The information he gave us was accurate, concise, and entirely irrelevant."

## The Devil's Offer

The devil visited a lawyer's office and made him an offer. "I can arrange some things for you," the devil said. "I'll increase your income five-fold. Your partners will love you; your clients will respect you; you'll have four months of vacation each year and live to be a hundred. All I require in return is that your wife's soul, your children's souls, and their children's souls rot in hell for eternity." The lawyer thought for a moment. "What's the catch?" he asked.

## You've Changed My Mind

Lawyer: "Now that you have been acquitted, will you tell me truly? Did you steal the car?" Client: "After hearing your amazing argument in court this morning, I'm beginning to think I didn't."

## Get Money to Heaven

A stingy old lawyer who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness was determined to prove wrong the saying, "You can't take it with you." After much thought and consideration, the old ambulance-chaser finally figured out how to take at least some of his money with him when he died. He instructed his wife to go to the bank and withdraw enough money to fill two pillow cases. He then directed her to take the bags of money to the attic and leave them directly above his bed. His plan: When he passed away, he would reach out and grab the bags on his way to heaven. Several weeks after the funeral, the deceased lawyer's wife, up in the attic cleaning, came upon the two forgotten pillow cases stuffed with cash. "Oh, that darned old fool," she exclaimed. "I knew he should have had me put the money in the basement."

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