Tuesday, December 17th, 2024

With only five percent of Americans celebrating Hanukkah, it may be surprising how mainstream it's becoming. Every department store has at least a small Hanukkah section- nothing in comparison to the massive Christmas showcases, but still enough to be noticeable. In the media, these holidays are treated mostly as the same, giving Hanukkah the name of "Jewish Christmas," despite the origins and meaning of

Hanukkah not aligning with that of Christmas.

According to britannica.com, Christmas as it's known to today is a combination of the celebration of Jesus' birthday in the Christian faith and the pagan holiday of the Winter Solstice. On the other hand, Hanukkah is a commemoration of "the rededication during the second century B.C. of the Second Temple in Jerusalem" after Jews fought

against the Syrian's oppressing them, according to history.com.

Hanukkah does not hold the same significance to Jewish people like Christmas has for the majority, and yet, they are treated so similarly. The only thing these holidays have in common is the dates, with Christmas always falling in late December, and Hanukkah falling somewhere between the last week of November and the first week of January.

The commercialization of Hanukkah started in the 20th century. According to news.utexas. edu, "Before World War II, Christmas as an American holiday was becoming increasingly popular even among immigrant Jews. For example, by the 1950s, 40 percent of middle-class Jewish homes in Chicago had a Christmas tree." This can be seen in the Diary of Anne Frank, where



The collision of Hanukkah and Christmas is sure to hold plenty of future historical significance...

Photo from *jewishmom.com*

the family handed out little gifts for the others- an influence of Christmas. Before this influence, gifts weren't a part of any family's Hanukkah traditions. The only "gifts" given to children were money, with the purpose of being able to go out and buy candles to light on the menorah, as well as using it to play dreidel

games, according to Britannica. com. Nowadays, most families will opt for chocolate coins.

Because Christmas is the surrounding holiday, this has led to a phenomenon called "Christmas Envy," which is a direct cause of the increasing marketing and manufacturing of Hanukkah. "Christmas Envy" often occurs in Jewish children, who will see all of the presents and traditions that their peers are getting

> and wanting to celebrate it too. Because of this, "Consumer goods and advertisers saw a great opportunity in marketing Hanukkah as a Jewish alternative to Christmas, manufacturing new ritual objects, promoting special holiday foods, and encouraging parents to shower their children with gifts," as stated news.utexas.edu.

So decorating and giving gifts for Hanukkah became more mainstream, even in Jew-

Hanukkah is now a bigger holiday than it ever has been in its history. New traditions have been created, but the "Christmas Envy" is still being fought and adapted to by Jewish parents. Unlike Christmas, Hanukkah has managed to keep its historical significance to the majority that celebrate it, and so lives on the Festival of Lights.

ish-majority countries like Israel.

online editor

Jane Richardson

With the colors exploding in the sky and falling in a cascade of mixing colors, New Years Eve has always brought wonder and beauty to the night sky. A feeling of accomplishment at completing another year and setting goals for the next one. But not many people stop to pause and think: Where did New Year's come from?

New Years dates as far back as Mesopotamia,

but it didn't fall on January 1 until the year 46 B.C, when Julius Caeser introduced the solar-based Julian calendar. A reason

ning. However, January 1 was revoked of its privilege of being the beginning of the year due to paganistic celebrations and instead was moved to December 25th, according to resolutiondenver.com.

Yet in 1582, Pope Gregory XIII applied small changes to the Julian Calander, and a new version was developed: The Gregorian Calander. Instead of being a lunar calendar it was now a solar calendar, and some days were removed, like October 5th to October 14th. Originally, only the Catholic church followed this calendar, but slowly, some European countries like Scotland, Denmark, Germany, and Russia began following it as well.

Even today it is still being used by some countries! According to resolutiondenver.com, some popular belief behind eating cer-

tain foods on this night will bring good luck and fortunes, or even wearing a certain color of underwear will bring things like love or prosperity! Even like what the first thing done after the clock strikes twelve the rest of the year

In Scotland and England, people gather in large groups of family and friends, and whoever is the first to step over the threshold brings good luck, according to britannica.com.

Whether New Years is on January 1st, April 14th, or any other day in between, 2025 is encroaching quickly with exploding fireworks, ing sparklers, and a whole new year's worth of promises.



RLIE BROWN CHRIST

Kodi Dykes

It's December, it's as cold as the way Charlie Brown depicted the Charlie Brown special, they the Christmas tree glows with colorful lights wrapped around its branches. And somewhere, there is a kid watching A Charlie Brown Christmas and falling in love with it for the first time. It's unique style, soft voice acting and songs, Linus's monologue about the meaning of Christmas without the capitalistic views. A Charlie Brown Christmas is thirty minutes of absolute comfort and joy, however, that's not the only thing it brought with its creation. It also began the downfall of aluminum Christmas trees.

In 2024, aluminum Christmas trees are probably long gone, most never having seen one in their life, but back when the movie was made, in 1965, they were still pretty popular. They were at their peak somewhere around 1960. Contrary to

Instead, they were literally the average fake Christmas tree but entirely made of foil. Foil stem, foil branches, foil needles. A shiny, silver tree that was a far cry from the real Christmas trees people had been putting in their homes since the beginning of time. There were other artificial trees in the market, but none that caught on quite as quickly as aluminum ones. Suddenly, trees made out of feathers or pig hair were out, and trees made from foil produced by an aluminum toy-making company were in. Aluminum Specialty, later rebranded as Evergleam, sold 10,000 metal trees that first Christmas, for just \$25, according to greatfallstribune.com. At the peak of aluminum trees, Evergleam was producing 150,000 of them every year. As seen in

it ever really gets here in Arizo- them, they weren't solid blocks of came in many colors and sizes, na, the stockings are put out and metal, that would've been insane. and were seen as space-age,



A real 1960s aluminum tree and its multicolored light wheel.

Photo from *pinterest.com*

which fits the bill for the 60s. So, what happened? Well, it's no coincidence that their early demise in the mid-60s matched up with the release of A Charlie budget animation that came out where people needed something during a time of civil rights pro-

testing and peak consumerism, and it was a hit. According to greatfallstribune.com, 15 million Americans watched the first broadcast of the special. The special, as most know, surrounds a seasonally depressed Charlie Brown who tries to understand what the true meaning of Christmas is due to what the holiday, in his eyes, has become. "We all know that Christmas is a big commercial racket," he states in the movie. He ends up rejecting the world's perception of Christmas: a ridiculous play put on by kids, Lucy cheating him out of money for a fake therapy session, and colorful, metal trees, and instead brings home the one real tree at the Christmas tree farm, despite its worn look.

Apparently, that sentiment stuck strongly with Americans.

Brown Christmas. It was a small The special came out at a time authentic, something true, and that's what A Charlie Brown Christmas was. It touched the heart of viewers, and although it very well could've been nothing but coincidence, by 1966, aluminum tree sales were already declining rapidly.

By 1967, they were no longer being regularly manufactured, according to mauinews.com. The rise of realistic-looking trees also probably helped with metal trees' destruction, but the damage was done, and they were no more. Charlie Brown had killed the foil, space-age trees, and with it, 1960's Christmas consumerism as Americans knew it. A Charlie Brown Christmas had reminded people of what flashy foil trees made them forget, and it left an everlasting impact on the Christmas market for years to come. So, thanks, Charlie Brown.