

# SYNTAX

THE GUSTAVUS WRITING CENTER NEWSLETTER

## ⌘ The Follies of the Holidays ⌘

by *Hasanga Samaraweera*

\***Santa.** He sees you when you're sleeping; he knows when you're awake. So the other 364 days of the year Santa is either a pedophile or an anesthesiologist?

\***Lights.** Somehow in a world where we've eradicated smallpox and built rocket ships, we still can't seem to make a strand of lights that doesn't become completely useless if just one light burns out. Where are our priorities?

\***Watering the tree.** Damn pine needles; it's like being attacked by porcupines.

\***Holiday music...**

**EVERYWHERE.** When elevator music has been perverted into A Clay Aiken Christmas you know it's just a little much. Clay, just stick to singing about being invisible.

\***Stockings.** So you're telling me I'm supposed to hang up some panty hose, and a jolly old man with a gut the size of a breadmaker is going to give me presents? I'm in.

\***Elves.** Get off your high horse thinking you're special because you're "Santa's Helpers." You're just wintertime lawn gnomes.

\***Over the top lights.** When I'm terrified that I might get a seizure walking past your house, there's something wrong.

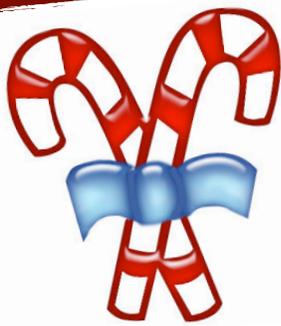
\***Milk and cookies for Santa.** Just another way for my mother to get around her diet.

\***Tinsel balls.** Accidentally breaking one of these raises the terror level to orange; have you not felt the shiny, metallic slivers they leave?

\***Ugly sweaters.** Some people wear these out in public. Sober.

\***Presents.** I'm just bitter because I got handkerchiefs for Christmas.

Anyway, let's say that after reading this you're still jazzed for the holidays and not thinking atheism looks real good right now. One problem: finals.



### *Writing Center Finals Week Hours*

Wednesday, December 15  
1:00-3:00 p.m.  
in the Library

Stop by the library for help  
on your final papers!

### *A recipe for a delectable final paper*

1/2 c. Amazing ideas  
1 tbsp. Outlining  
3/4 c. Insightful introduction  
3 c. Well written paragraphs  
1/4 c. Snappy conclusion  
1 tsp. Proofreading  
a pinch of Facebook



Combine all ingredients - but don't mix too quickly! Taking breaks is key in this recipe. After a day (or two or three), you'll have an excellent paper that your professors will eat right up!

# What's up with Holiday Cards?

## ✧ Pro(se) of Holiday Cards ✧

by Kyle Jensen

Remember that third cousin you met at your family reunion in Wisconsin six years ago, the daughter of your second cousin once removed on your mom's side? Yeah, I wouldn't either. But when you get the holiday card in the mail, you'll recognize her face among the vaguely familiar family of four wearing their matching Christmas sweaters. You'll remember her when she had braces and her red hair stuck out in Pippy Longstocking pigtails. You'll remember her as the girl who clung to her stuffed pony and hid her snotty nose in its stringy mane. You'll especially remember the stuffed pony because she collected everyone's leftovers off of their plates, combined them in a bowl, and placed it on the ground for the pony to finish.

You'll learn from the paragraphs dedicated to her in the accompanying Christmas letter that she's a finalist in the National Chess Circuit, is fluent in three languages, and she enjoys charting the astrological signs for family and friends in her spare time. You'll wonder if the pony still follows her wherever she goes, and you'll squint at her family picture and, sure enough, you see its shadow hiding behind her.

And even though you share .781% of your DNA, you'll remember she's family.

## ✧ Cons of Holiday Cards ✧

by Ethan Marxhausen

There has never, in the entire history of the Christmas season, been a reasonable person who has been genuinely excited to receive a Christmas card. Think of the reaction your mother (because it's always your mother) had when she opened one of those cards last year. It probably wasn't this: "Wow, look at all this great information about the Hendersons! They've totally been running through my mind since I last heard from them five years ago." It was probably more like this: "Oh. The Hendersons. Didn't they move to Canada or something?"

It's a good thing these cards are opened and read in the privacy of a home. Nobody's feelings get hurt. The simple fact is, if you're sending a Christmas card to somebody, you probably can't be bothered to communicate with them through any other means of modern communication. I have yet to read a Christmas card that includes more information than could be covered during the course of a five-minute phone call.

I suppose the family picture is sort of important. But let's think about the circumstances surrounding that picture. This is not the family at its best, its happiest, or its sanest. This is a family who has heard "EVERYBODY SHUT UP AND SMILE, BECAUSE THIS IS GONNA BE OUR CHRISTMAS PIC AND ITS GOTTA BE PERFECT" about a dozen times in as many minutes.

In fact, it seems the only people who can find joy in these overproduced polaroids are the same ones who make them every year. These are not reasonable people. But there's one in every family.

## Snow

by Louis MacNeice

The room was suddenly rich and the great bay-window was  
Spawning snow and pink roses against it  
Soundlessly collateral and incompatible:  
World is suddener than we fancy it.

World is crazier and more of it than we think,  
Incorrigibly plural. I peel and portion  
A tangerine and spit the pips and feel  
The drunkenness of things being various.

And the fire flames with a bubbling sound for world  
Is more spiteful and gay than one supposes -  
On the tongue on the eyes on the ears in the palms of one's hands -  
There is more than glass between the snow and the huge roses.

# HAPPY HOLIDAYS

*from the Writing Center!*



*See you next semester!*