

30th Annual Methuen Festival of Trees Celebration



Courtesy of Blue & White Staff

A display of miniature trees lined the shelves at the Festival of Trees celebration.

by Sloan Farrell

The Methuen Festival of Trees closed out its 30th year celebrating on December 2, 2023 with over 200 trees proudly on display.

The Festival of Trees is a fundraising event focused on the preservation of historical sites of the Merrimack Valley. The group that organizes the event has donated more than \$2 million to various preservation projects in Massachusetts, Maine and New Hampshire.

Over 200 trees are donated annually by local companies, families, schools, and groups. A panel of judges award stellar trees in 10 categories, along with one ‘Best of the Festival’ award. The winner of this award gets the opportunity to present a tree the following year at the Charles Center Court.

Visitors were able to purchase raffle tickets, and every wreath, mini tree and large tree went to a lucky winner.

The first Festival took place in 1994 at the Nevins Memorial Library, with a humble 17 trees. The festival was conceived in order to raise enough funds to repair the Tenney Gate House, located on Pleasant Street. Repairs to the Gatehouse were completed soon thereafter, and it became the Methuen Museum of History.

The Festival quickly grew in popularity, eventually boasting more than 10 times the original number of trees. People now come from all over New England to experience the celebration while many visitors continue to be unaware of the purpose behind it.

The Festival of Trees Inc. is the non-profit organization that organizes the Methuen Festival of Trees and allocates the funds raised to their nearly 60 preservation partners in 25 communities across Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine.

For more information, go to <https://www.methuenfestivaloftrees.com/>

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Almost, Maine

by Chloe Cochrane

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Methuen High School’s theater program, also known as Stage Door 22, put on a production of the play *Almost, Maine* for this year’s annual fall play. *Almost, Maine* is a play featuring a series of 9 vignettes– brief accounts or tellings– centered around the themes of love and loss. These vignettes are connected by their setting; they all take place in the ‘almost-town’ of *Almost, Maine*.

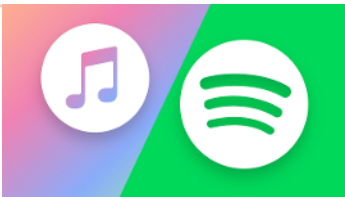
The play was written by John Cariani, a well-known actor and playwright, who wrote the play based on his own experiences growing up in northern Maine. Cariani, when discussing the play, states that *Almost, Maine* is, “a play about real people who are really, truly, honestly dealing with the toughest thing there is to deal with in life: love.” Methuen High School’s theater department did an amazing job capturing the ideas that Cariani wrote into this play.

The play begins with the prologue, a scene featuring two characters; Ginette and Pete. In MHS’ production, Pete was played by junior Charlie Trussell, while Ginette was played by junior Emi Grondine. They sit on a bench, staring at the starry sky, when Ginette professes her love to Pete. He loves her too. Ginette tells Pete that she wants to be close to him- as close as possible. While she scoots up next to Pete, Pete innocently explains to Ginette that since the Earth is round, she’s actually not close to him at all. She’s as far away as she can be. Ginette is hurt by this-she runs off stage, leaving Pete alone, as he states she’s getting closer and closer. He soon realizes that she has left him. The scene ends.

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Spirit Week 2023



Apple Music vs .
Spotify



Movie Reviews and
Previews

MHS Fall Play: Almost, Maine

Continued from front page...

by Chloe Cochrane

Scene one, a separate story entitled “Her Heart” features actors Riley Lyons and Doro Cesar, portraying the characters East and Glory. Glory is a tourist who comes to Maine in hopes of seeing the esteemed northern lights, and she ends up in the “town” of Almost. She sets up camp in East’s front yard, and is outside looking for the lights when East comes out to ask what she’s doing in his yard. She explains her story and introduces herself. East is enraptured and kisses her– surprising even himself– and Glory almost leaves. East gets her to stay, and she explains that she was hoping to say goodbye to her deceased husband, finding him in the Northern Lights. He broke her heart before he died, and she carries the remains of it in a paper bag, which she’s been carrying the whole conversation to keep herself alive. East talks her through her husband’s death and eases some of her guilt. He explains that he’s a repairman. He takes her heart in his hands; he can fix it. The audience then can see the Northern Lights.

“Sad and Glad” is the second scene of Almost, Maine. This scene features the actors Malakai Denault as Jimmy, Isabella Cerbone as Sandrine, and Katie Merino as Villian. Jimmy and Sandrine are an ex-couple who had broken up recently and they find each other again in Almost’s bar, Moose Paddy. Sandrine is waiting for the bathroom when Jimmy calls her over and

starts trying to win her back. Sandrine explains that she’s there for her bachelorette party; she’s getting married the next day. Jimmy is incredibly disappointed. It is revealed that after the two broke up, Jimmy got a tattoo of the word ‘villian’- an unfortunate misspelling of the word ‘villain’ because of the guilt and regret that lingered in his heart. It gets more uncomfortable between the two, so Jimmy tries to call the waiter over for drinks to celebrate Sandrine’s wedding. Sandrine leaves before the waiter comes over, and Jimmy is left to wallow in her wake. The waiter finally shows up, and we discover that her name is Villian. Jimmy is given hope after all the pain- and they hit it off.

Scene three, “This Hurts”, features Jacey Cripps and Alejandro Javier Roche, portraying the characters Marvalyn and Steve. This scene takes place in an apartment laundry room, and begins with Marvalyn accidentally hitting Steve with an ironing board. Strangely, as Marvalyn begins apologizing profusely, Steve doesn’t react. It is learned that Steve doesn’t feel pain due to a condition known as congenital analgesia. Steve carries around a notebook so he can be aware of what to be afraid of with the help of his brother. This concerns Marvalyn, who tells Steve that she thinks his brother is controlling him. Steve takes this to heart and talks about how he hears Marvalyn and her boyfriend fighting frequently. Amidst this conversation, Marvalyn kisses Steve. They’re both shocked, by kisses and revelations, and the scene ends with Marvalyn again

accidentally hitting Steve with the same ironing board. This time, he cries out in pain.

Proceeding to scene three is “Getting it Back” followed by an intermission and then four other scenes- “They Fell”, “Where it Went”, “Story of Hope”, and “Seeing the Thing”, which are more short scenes, some bittersweet and some on the happier side. All of these portray unique tales and numerous different characters played by the talented actors of the MHS theater department- but they all take place in the “town” of Almost. By the end of the play, there’s a newfound appreciation for the place that didn’t seem all that special at first. It houses ordinary people that are just like the ones sitting in the audience. They deal with the same things we do; love, relationships and hardships, and family life.

The play ends with the epilogue- a follow up scene to the story of Ginette and Pete, in which Ginette returns to the bench and to Pete. She has seemingly walked all the way around the world, as she comes from the opposite side of the stage where she had left originally. She did this to get as close to Pete as she possibly could.

If you didn’t get to see MHS’s production of Almost, Maine, consider reading the play or watching it elsewhere. It’s a truly beautiful collection and worth your time to enjoy. Make sure you don’t miss out on our school’s next production this spring!

The 2023 Senior Class Trip

by Kai Patterson

The senior class trip to New York City was on December 9th, 2023. This reporter went on the trip with seven of my friends, and will be providing a first-hand experience of the trip!

After the four hour long bus ride, we spent the day going into museums and exploring Times Square. We also visited an 'I love New York' store to buy souvenirs.

After that, we went to Madame Tussaud's wax museum. It took us two and a half hours to make it through all of the different areas. We took many pictures with the wax figures and we also took many pictures with all of the different sets and items they had there. The figures ranged from celebrities to historical figures to

horror characters and to musical figures.

Once we finished at the wax museum we made our way to the Hershey's store. It was incredibly difficult to navigate the streets of New York City because it was so crowded with people and the streets were crowded with cars. There were police officers directing traffic because the drivers weren’t following the lights.

Once we made it to the Hershey’s store we spent a few minutes looking around before we had to leave to walk over to the Museum of Broadway. Once we were checked in and inside the museum we were able to walk through the decades of Broadway musicals, showcasing one specific musical per decade. After the museum we went back to the Hershey's store to kill time before dinner. My friends ordered milkshakes before we walked over to dinner so they could drink their shakes while we were waiting.

It took about an hour in line before we got into the restaurant and we ate quickly because we weren’t there for very long. The food was good but it wasn’t the best food we’ve ever had. After dinner we got back on the bus and took the four hour drive home, with us arriving back at the school at around 1:30 am on Sunday morning.

The 30th Annual Festival of Trees!



Veterans Day Parade 2023

by Kaylie Lam

On November 11th, 2023, the city of Methuen came together to celebrate Veterans Day with its annual parade. Starting at 10 AM and ending a little after 11 AM, the parade started and ended on Broadway. During the parade, the crowd stopped by the Walnut Grove Cemetery for a brief ceremony honoring the veterans who sacrificed their lives for the USA.

Methuen High School's own JROTC and Ranger Band participated in the Veterans Day Parade. The JROTC marched while carrying the USA and Massachusetts flags and the Ranger Band was right behind them, playing a variety of service songs.

Stopping at the Walnut Grove Cemetery, the attendees of the parade paid their respects to the veterans who served in the US military. Speeches were given by a variety of volunteers, all of which

explained the importance of Veterans Day. Once the speeches were finished, two trumpet soloists from the Ranger Band, juniors Milo Issacs and Elden Charles, performed "Navy's Hymn". After the two solos, the Ranger Band performed the "Star Spangled Banner". Once the Ranger Band finished their performance, the attendees and organizations marched out of the cemetery and back to Broadway.

Some other organizations who participated in the Veterans Day Parade included the Tenney 2023-2024 NJHS Chapter, the Tenney Grammar School, the North Eastern Italian Band, and a small group of people representing the Lawrence Vietnam Veterans.

Veterans Day is not just a day off from school, it's a day of remembrance. It's a

day to remember the sacrifices of the many people who served in the US military. It's a day to honor the memory of those who lost their lives in battle. Most importantly, it's a day to respect those who've served in the military.

Many people don't know how to celebrate Veterans Day, leading them to not celebrate the holiday at all. But a great way to celebrate Veterans Day is to attend the Veterans Day Parade!



POST 122 Methuen, MA
John Dowd, Commander





GROUPS WILL FORM UP AT THE AMERICAN LEGION POST AT 9:30am AND PARADE BEGINS ON BROADWAY AT 10.



Join us in a celebration to honor America's veterans for their patriotism, love of country, and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good.

TO REGISTER, CONTACT:
TOM HARGREAVES (thhargreaves@hotmail.com)

DEADLINE TO REGISTER : FRI, NOV 3

VETERANS DAY PARADE
SATURDAY, NOV 11, 2023

Route: North on Broadway; left at clock tower onto Hampshire street; left onto Lowell Street past Central Fire Station; left on Grove Street to Legion Memorial plot in Walnut Grove Cemetery for brief ceremony. After ceremony, the parade will reform and return to Legion post via the same route.

Spirit Week 2023!

by Kaylie Lam

From Wednesday, November 15th to Wednesday the 22nd, MHS staff and students were invited to participate in a spirit week leading up to the annual Pep Rally, which was also a half day and the day before Thanksgiving. Spirit days themes were decided by the MHS Student Council.

The Spirit Days are listed below:

Wednesday 11/15: Culture Day

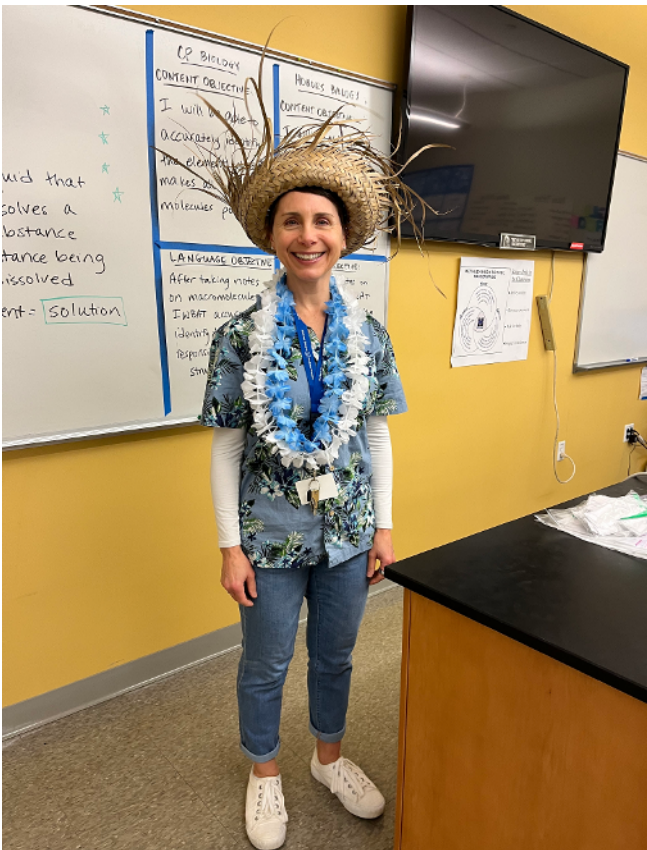
Culture Day was on Wednesday the 15th. Staff and students were encouraged to wear clothing from their cultures to school. Freshman Layla El Hamaoui, who wore a Kuifya, an authentic Palestinian scarf, stated, “I think culture day is a good thing to have because it helps people express who they really are.”

Thursday 11/16: Favorite Place Day

Favorite Place Day was on Thursday the 16th. Staff and students were encouraged to wear location-labeled clothing, such as an “I (Heart) NYC” shirt. Freshman Sophia Polit, who wore a Los Angeles labeled shirt, stated, “Honestly, this is definitely not one of my favorite spirit days. I didn’t get to really see all of the different places people were trying to show, and I just feel like there are more creative ones out there.” Polit is also a member of the MHS Student Council and explained why they chose this as a spirit day, “I think the student council as a whole chose this spirit day because it’s very easy to participate in and it is very different compared to other spirit days we’ve had here at MHS.”

Friday 11/17: Tropical Day

Tropical Day was on Friday the 17th. Staff and students were encouraged to wear tropical-themed clothing such as a Hawaiian shirt. Dr. Khan, a Biology teacher, participated in this and wore a Hawaiian shirt, a straw hat, and a flower lei. Freshman Chloe Santarpio also participated in this spirit day by wearing a Hawaiian shirt. She stated, “I really liked this spirit day because it gives students another thing to do. It’s awesome to see other people participate in this because it’s a very fun and different thing to do! You won’t feel awkward being the only one participating.”



Biology teacher, Dr.Khan, on Tropical Day

Monday 11/20: Future Profession Day

Future Profession Day was on Monday the 20th. Students (and staff if they want a new job...) were encouraged to dress as what they believed they would work as in the future. Freshman Chloe Cochrane enjoyed this spirit day and said, “I think it was a cool idea but not a lot of people participated in it (future profession day). I think we need to find a way to increase spirit day participation.”



Freshmen Arianna Marchand and Chloe Santarpio on Twin Day

Tuesday 11/21: Twin Day

Twin Day was on Tuesday the 21st. Staff and students were encouraged to “twin” with other staff and students. Freshman Arianna Marchand participated in this spirit day and twinned with Freshmen Chloe Santarpio. Arianna stated, “It’s fun to find a friend and dress up with them instead of doing something on your own. I think it builds stronger friendships, at least for me and Chloe. Everyone knew we were friends.”

Wednesday 11/22: Grade Colors / Pep Rally

Grade Colors was on Wednesday the 22nd. Students were encouraged to dress as their grade assigned color. Freshmen wore gray, sophomores wore white, juniors wore blue, and seniors wore black. Wednesday the 22nd was also the day of the Pep Rally, where each grade participated in a variety of competitive events.

Girls Basketball Season Preview

by Lily Giard and Maya Tourkantonis

“If you chase your passion with relentless effort and discipline, anything is possible.”

Varsity Girls Basketball Head Coach Ryan Middlemiss has high expectations for his team this year, with returning stars and promising newcomers. Dreams of an MVC championship, D1 playoffs, and building a strong program are all goals Middlemiss and the team wants to achieve, but how do they plan to achieve these?

This article will take a closer look at the team's potential and the overall expectations for the season.

Middlemiss is aware that talent and success alone can't make a team great until it is paired with effective coaching. “My goal is to continue getting better at building relationships with all the players, and continuing to learn how to inspire and motivate players to achieve their best,” Middlemiss said.

As for the players individually, there are certain academic and behavioral expectations. “Although there is no tangible grade we ask for, we just ask the girls to try their best,” said Middlemiss.

Overall, Middlemiss prioritizes positive attitudes for his players both on and off the court. He wants them to work as hard as they can, and to treat people as well as they can. “Being generous, selfless, and kind are important traits we would like to help build in the players.” Middlemiss believes that if the girls can focus more on the group than themselves, and in celebrating the team’s success as much as their own, that the Rangers will have an extremely successful season.

The Rangers are looking to make their way back into the Division 1 playoffs this year and make a run in it. Coach Middlemiss says that if the girls are willing to put all their effort into the sport and encourage one another then they have a chance at making it far in the playoffs. “It ultimately comes down to the athlete and how bad they want something and how hard they are willing to sacrifice for the sport.” Middlemiss said.

Pep Rally 2023

by Sarah Fairchild

On Wednesday, November 22, 2023, Methuen High School's annual Thanksgiving week pep rally was held in the Klimas Memorial Field House. As with every year, each grade had their own color. Seniors wore black, juniors wore blue, sophomores wore white, and freshman wore gray.

This year there were six games that each grade went head-to-head in to win. Those six games were: the hula hoop challenge, half court shot, potato sack race, tug of war, turkey toss and best decorations.

The MHS cheerleaders kicked off the rally with a great performance causing cheers from every section.

The first game that each grade competed in was the hula hoop challenge. Each grade level got one hula hoop, had to connect hands, and pass the hula hoop from one end to the other. In order to get the

point, each grade had to get their body through the hula hoop and back around. After loads of cheering, the seniors won.

The second game was the half court shot. Each grade level got two tries for the half court shot. Sophomore Jazzy Mora made it, causing all the sophomores to get loud. After the juniors went, it was time for the seniors. First up for the seniors was Drew Eason, who got the seniors up and cheering. Eason made his shot, causing the crowd to go wild. After everyone got a second chance with the half court shot, everyone moved up to see how many people could make a three point shot. Finally, the sophomores won the half court shot, adding a point on the board.

The third game was the potato sack race. Each grade level had to go around the cone at the other side of the court, back down the court and switch off with the next person. The freshman were in the lead but the seniors caught up and won, adding another point to the board.

The fourth game was the tug of war. Each grade level picked 10 contestants to go against the other grades. The first round, which ended with everyone shocked, saw the freshman beat the seniors. Next up was the sophomores versus the juniors, which ended up with the sophomores winning. Then it was the juniors' and seniors' turn to

face each other. This time the seniors took the win. The fourth round between freshman and sophomores ended up with the sophomores winning. The last round happened between the Sophomores and the staff. The staff beat the sophomores which of course made the staff go crazy and earned them one point on the scoreboard.

The final game of the day was the turkey toss. The four pairs were - Hicham Aboutoui and Tayshawn Dorneval for the Freshman, Anthony Sarcione and Tim Dornezon for the Sophomores, Jaiden Rodriguez and Shane Eason for the Juniors, Jariell Morales and Brady Gourley for the Seniors and two staff members. After about nine throws the sophomores were out. The freshmen were the second grade level to be out soon after.

This left the juniors, seniors and staff as the last three groups standing. After loads of cheering from both grade levels and the staff, the seniors won when the staff and juniors both failed to catch their passes.

To end the pep rally, the contest for best declarations began. In last place was the freshman, who ended the pep rally with ten points. Then it was announced that there was a three-way tie between the sophomores, juniors and staff with 12 points each. In first place, of course, were the seniors!

Should MHS switch to a four day school week?

by Kaylie Lam



Four day school weeks are slowly becoming more common throughout districts and schools across the United States. According to CBS News, nearly 900 school districts have implemented a four day school week.

For many staff and students, this could be an amazing change, as getting an extra day to relax could be really beneficial. But, a four day week might require us to make some sacrifices, such as having longer school days, having the school year last longer, and adjusting the block schedule. This makes many wonder, is a four day school week *really* worth it? Should MHS switch to four day weeks as well?

To start off, one of the costs of having a four day school week could require schools working up to 45 weeks instead of the usual 36 weeks to meet the 180 day requirement. This is a huge increase and not only will we have to stay in school longer, but we'd end school later and start school earlier than a district following a five day week schedule, making our summer break much shorter.

If longer school years are not possible, schools can also make the school days themselves longer. Many schools on the four day

schedule add roughly 50 minutes to each day in order to meet educational requirements.

Another cost of having a four day school week is that we may not get the opportunity to have a 7 class schedule unless we add an extra time period into the school day. Having four days of school instead of the full five does not allow our schedules to cycle through fully, meaning we will miss out on one class. A way to avoid this would be to add an extra time period to the school day, but that would force us to stay in school longer, which could interfere with bus routes, sport schedules, and extracurricular activities.

A benefit, however, of a four day school week is that data shows that the attendance rate of students increased. Having a higher attendance rate means students will be in class more often and learning, which could ultimately increase test scores.

Another benefit of a four day school week is that the school will only be paying for four days of school as opposed to five, which will help save money. This money could be used on other things, such as school lunch, class opportunities, and much more.

A few MHS students expressed their opinion on the question, "Should MHS switch to a four day school week schedule even if it means the school year would last longer?":

Freshman Chloe Cochrane stated, "Absolutely! I think it would boost student morale, work efficiency, and improve attendance rates."

Freshman Libby Nichols commented, "I personally think four days of school sounds good in aspect but I personally would rather have a longer summer vacation. If we go to school for four days, then our summer vacations will be shorter and our school days will be longer, which personally is not my cup of tea. So, I would prefer to go to school five days a week with "shorter" days."

Freshman Sophia Polit said, "I think so. Obviously there are different pros and cons but ultimately I Think that just having that first day of the week off could show some better side effects like the better ability they'll (students) have to learn, their productivity, or their overall energy just by having that extra day off."

When it comes to switching to a four day school week schedule, I believe that districts should do whatever is in better interest of their students, whether that be keeping the average five day school week or switching to a four day school week.

Spotify or Apple Music?

by Emma Lam

Is Spotify or Apple Music better? The debate between the two music streaming apps is nothing new. Both have their unique qualities, however their listeners argue that one is better than the other.

Spotify includes not only music, but also audiobooks and podcasts that Apple Music doesn't provide. The app is also free, but it has ads unless you pay for the premium version. Another feature Spotify has that Apple Music is said to have soon are collaborative playlists. Collaborative playlists allow listeners to create playlists with other people, so anyone who has the shared playlist can listen or add songs.

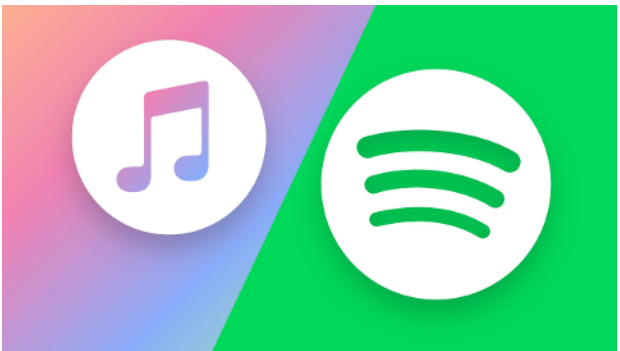
Apple Music must be paid for but includes all of its features, such as better

sound quality, music videos, and broadcast radio. It also has a karaoke feature where the music won't play unless you're singing along. A feature of both apps is being able to play music while on FaceTime with a friend so both are listening and can control the music.

As for prices, Spotify premium subscriptions include individual plans costing \$10.99 a month, Duo plans cost \$14.99 a month, family plans cost \$16.99 a month, and student plans cost \$5.99 a month.

Apple Music's subscriptions include voice plan for \$4.99 a month, student plans for \$5.99 a month, individual plans for \$10.99 a month, and family plans for \$16.99 a month. The voice plan, which may not be as popular, is a cheaper version of Apple Music where you have access to all of Apple Music's features, but you must talk to Siri to access it.

A couple MHS students gave their opinion on whether they prefer Spotify or Apple Music. Sophomore Damien



Courtesy of Google Images
Apple Music Logo (left) and Spotify Logo (right)

Pellegrini, who has listened to music with both apps, prefers Apple Music because "it has better sound quality." Junior Crystal Castro prefers Spotify because she's grown up using it and hasn't had any experience with Apple Music. Tanzim Mahmud prefers Spotify because "it has more collaborations." Former MHS student and junior at UMass Lowell, Allison Lam, prefers Spotify because it costs less money.

All in all, Apple Music and Spotify both have their unique features. They both have features that the other doesn't, so it's really based on one's preferences.

The Land is Inhospitable and So Are We, by Mitski

by Janely Sanchez

Released on September 15th 2023, *The Land Is Inhospitable And So Are We* is a 32 minute long, Americana, orchestral pop album that has been called by artist Mitski herself, “Her most American album with the theme of love.”

Influences for the album range from spaghetti Western soundtracks to works of Arthur Russell, Igor Stravinsky, Scott Walker, Caetano Veloso, Faron Young and Terry Riley. It was helped by the release of her singles “Bug Like an Angel” released July 26th, “Star” / “Heaven” both released August 23rd and “My Love Mine All Mine” released October 3rd.

The songs in order is “Bug Like an Angel”, “Buffalo Replaced”, “Heaven”, “I Don’t Like My Mind”, The Deal”, “When Memories Snow”, “My Love Mine All Mine”, “The Frost”, “Star”, “I’m Your Man”, And “I Love Me After You”.

When the album was released to the public, it gained more than 5 million streams on its first day. In an interview with Mitski by Genius, she stated, “This is the first record where I absolutely stopped caring about what people think; ironically maybe that’s what people are most attracted to.”

For a long while, she was known for making sad music for sad people, so she felt as if her sad music was only being loved by sad people. She continued her somber songs which were still adored, but it wasn’t what her heart desired. For her new album, she decides to do what she truly wants. This album is a brand new feeling compared to her old songs, and it shows that she has truly grown from deep sadness and she finds that she can love people, and her fans love it. She sings about her lover in certain songs such as “Heaven”, “My Love Mine All Mine”, “Star”, “I’m Your Man”, and “I Love Me After You”, all very similar songs.

The most popular single of the album, ‘My Love Mine All Mine’, was created by a walk back home from the grocery store, she hummed her way back to her safe space when she thought of a song. According to Mitski, “...I tend to make up songs in my head when I really want to dissociate from the moment. [...] And then once I got home I put the groceries down and I recorded everything, and I got it.”



“If I ever found a place where I belonged, that in itself would be an identity crisis to me.” -Mitski



Courtesy of Google Images
Album covers for The Land Is Inhospitable And So Are We

Mitski has been shown to have an open mind with her music, and that’s why millions of people adore her. She sings beautiful lines in ‘My Love Mine All Mine’ and that’s why it’s a fan favorite.

“Moon, a hole of light, through the big top tent up high here before and after me, shinin' down on me. Moon, tell me if I could send up my heart to you?” Here Mitski talks about how one day she sat outside and the moon was so bright and it looked like the sky was a tent and the moon was a hole in the tent. She talks about how she can’t wrap her head around the fact that the moon is so much older than her and existed before her and will after her, which she expresses with, “It’s gonna keep being there long after I die, it’s like a dog at two years old is an adult and then it maybe gets ten to fifteen years, god bless. And in moon years, I’m like a speck of dust floating, maybe for a few seconds completely insignificant and then I disappear.”

Her first released single from the album, called “Bug Like an Angel” sings about religion, addiction and the mixture of sinfulness and the devil with holiness and the angel. “There's a bug like an angel stuck to the bottom of my glass, with a little bit left.” The bug represents the deception that a devil makes to seem be like an angel and how she’s digesting the devils destructive behavior with alcohol.

Mitski also explains that there is a bug stuck to the bottom of someone's cup and as they raise the cup it looks like an angel. “As I got older, I learned I'm a drinker. Sometimes a drink feels like family”. This also represents alcoholism, especially generational alcoholism.

A choir is introduced and this gives more into the religious ideology and mindset of Mitski. “When I'm bent over, wishin' it was over, makin' all variety of vows I'll never keep. I try to remember the wrath of the devil was also given him by God”. The line with the devil and God is meaningful and Mitski wanted the listener to think of both a pessimistic and an optimistic meaning of the song. The optimistic version of the song talks about the protagonist saying that even when they are at rock bottom and have nowhere to go or no one to talk to, that their sorrow and the suffering was also the suffering that God gave to the devil and maybe there is a cause and something to learn about.

The pessimistic option is that the protagonist is again bent over and at rock bottom and they are making vows to God but then they think that maybe the suffering was created by the devil that God intended to make, that maybe their suffering was made by God and that it was useless to be asking Him for help.

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The next single by Mitski is “Star” and she accidentally made the song a while ago in a friend’s backyard. “Remember when we met, we acted like two fools”. The lines are inspired from two characters in the Major Arcana, otherwise known as Tarot cards: The Lover and The Fool. The Lovers represent purity, protection, honesty, compassion and intimacy. The Fool represents innocence, and free mindedness. In this song, her and her lover were in love but it soon died out. “That love is like a star, it's gone,"she sings. "We just see it shining, it's traveled very far, I'll keep a leftover light burning, so you can keep looking up. Isn't that worth holding on?" The star, being love, signifies that it stays there for a long time and

when it dies, it’s still there even if you cannot see it, just like the death of a star.

The last single of this album is “Heaven” and it was released the same day that “Star” was. These songs are so filled with love, you can feel it through the lyrics. “All of our love filling all of our room, your low warm voice curses,” Mitski reflects. She and her lover are so smitten with each other that their love fills the entire room. The song, however, contains a much sadder message. When Mitski sings, “And the dark awaits us all around the corner. But here, in our place we have for the day, can we stay a while and listen for heaven?” she is saying that death is coming for the pair soon and that death is inevitable. As they die together, they listen out for heaven.

50 Years Later: Sabbath Bloody Sabbath

by Sloan Farrell
Released December 1, 1973
Length: 42 minutes
Black Sabbath’s 5th studio album

The release of Sabbath Bloody Sabbath was an incredible turning point in Black Sabbath's career that took place 50 years ago, on December 1, 1973. At the time of inception, the guitarist, Tommy Iommi, was suffering from his first case of writer’s block ever. The guitar solo at the end of the lead single of the album, a track of the same name, was the first piece of music Iommi wrote for the record, breaking his mental barrier.

The album was regarded by Iommi in his memoir as “the pinnacle”. Sabbath’s bassist, Geezer Butler went as far as to say, “When Tony came up with the riff to “Sabbath Bloody Sabbath” it was almost like seeing your first child being born. It was the end of our musical drought. It meant the band had a present, and a future, again.”

It was also the first Sabbath album that received support from media and critics, with many outlets writing about the album in high regard.

The album opens up with the power of Iommi’s tuned-down guitar and Osbourne calling out a memorable chorus of “Nobody will ever let you know/When you ask the reasons why” in the title song, “Sabbath Bloody Sabbath”. This album sets a tone of imminent destruction, of the band, and of the world. The audience is transported into the music and, temporarily, the music becomes the world.

The third song, “Fluff”, is an instrumental transition between the ominous, industrial environment established in “Sabbath Bloody Sabbath” and “A

National Acrobat” into a more poetic scene.

The album was organized to be played on a record and “Sabbra Cadabra” would be the final song on side A. This song is about finding love, but manages to stay true to the “cool” air surrounding Sabbath.

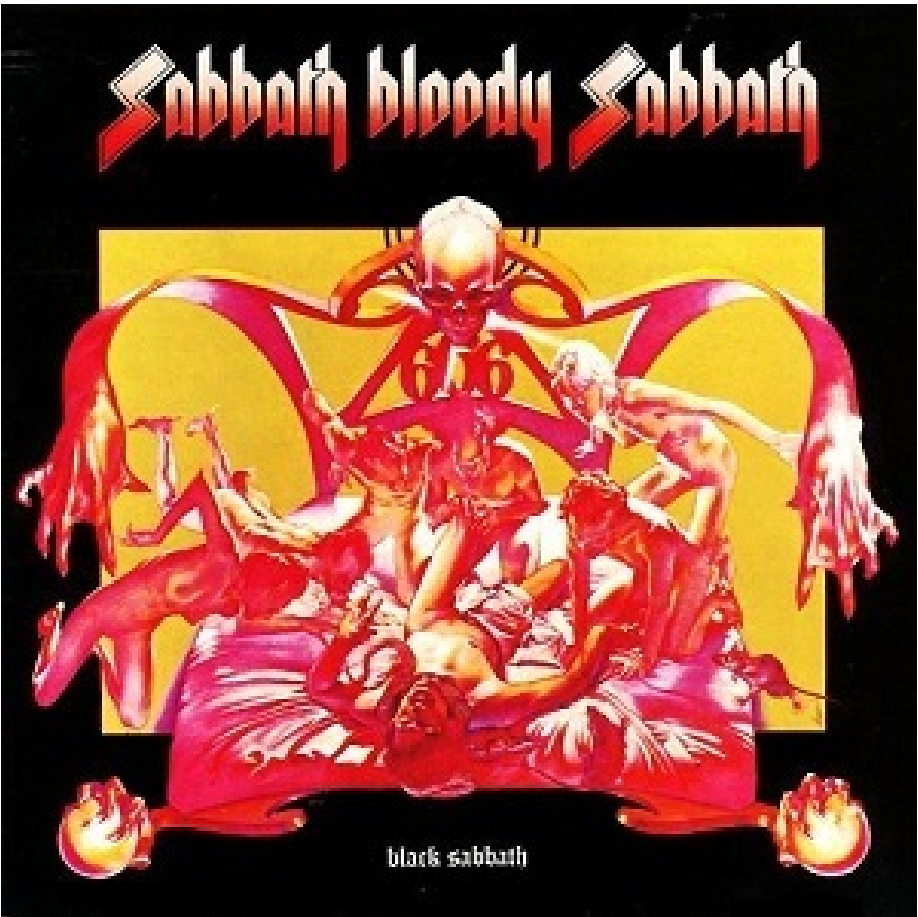
The final song on the album is an orchestral tune titled “Spiral Architect”, possibly one of the most interesting songs on the album. Butler, who wrote most of Sabbath’s lyrics, had dreamt the song and called Osbourne after, who loved the idea.

The song speaks about life, the beauty of the things that one values and that bring joy to their world. The story of the song is told through the mind of the “Spiral Architect” which is sometimes interpreted figuratively, as a god or, literally, as an architect. In the case of the literal architect, he designs beautiful structures for the world while being unsure of his place in society; he’s not sure who to trust. As the song continues, the architect looks internally and finds that the world cannot be as bad as he thinks because he is not bad, therefore not all people are.

This concept of being “bad” is a common motif in Sabbath’s music and the idea of good versus evil tends to appear, as Black Sabbath often embraced the accusations of being evil and occult throughout their career.

This idea that not all people are bad causes the architect to “spiral” and reflect on his past, as the song fades into an orchestral solo.

Originally, Iommi planned to play bagpipes in the song, although he had never



Courtesy of Google Images

Album Cover for Sabbath Bloody Sabbath

before. On the day of recording, Iommi bought a set and found that he could not play them in any capacity. The members of the band worked together to fill the bag using a vacuum and they still couldn’t achieve the effect they wanted. Ultimately, the bagpipes didn’t make it on to the track and instead, Sabbath opted for an orchestra.

The orchestra had no written music to go off of but instead Ozzy Osbourne hummed what he wanted and they performed it from what they had heard.

The finished product of the album was a success although the band had their fair share of trials and tribulations.

All members of Black Sabbath took experimental leaps of faith on Sabbath Bloody Sabbath that blended into a cohesive, narrative album that remains highly acclaimed 50 years later.

Napoleon Review

by Luke Polomoscanik

Over the Thanksgiving break, Ridley Scott released his newest historical epic, *Napoleon*, starring Joaquin Phoenix as Napoleon and Vanessa Kirby as his wife, Josephine. This was easily one of my most anticipated movies of the year not only because of Ridley Scott, but the cast and the subject matter as well.

However, even with all these positive attributes, the film was released to mixed reception from both critics and audiences (59% and 58% on Rotten Tomatoes, respectively) and is projected to lose its studio a lot of money due to its high production and marketing budget.

With all of this said, I walked away enjoying Napoleon a lot. The aspect of the film I got the most out of was the battle sequences, specifically the Battle of Austerlitz. In this scene, we see French led forces beat their enemy by driving them to retreat over frozen water and then shooting out the water to where they plunge to death by drowning or hypothermia. The scene works not only in its wide shots showing all of the action clearly, but shows how much of a strong leader and hungry for power Napoleon was. These points are also seen in the film’s climactic battle at Waterloo, except making the scale 10 times bigger, and showing even in the face of certain defeat, Napoleon’s lust for power was still strong.

In between all the masterfully made battle sequences, the film depicts the toxic relationship between Napoleon and Josephine. While it is entertaining, with Phoenix’s performance bringing a lot of intentional, or unintentional humor, it comes off as not fully thought out. You never feel like you know them as

people as sometimes Phoenix’s performance comes off as too silly to take seriously. Kirby however, is able to somewhat ground down his performance with her own as she brings the proper attitude to the scenes.

Adding to that point, the film never really knows how to portray its lead character through writing as well as performance. He’s shown to be a brilliant leader in battle, especially in the battles previously mentioned, but also comes off as an insecure teenager, pouting when he doesn’t get his way with his wife. While this doesn’t make the story fully work, it certainly makes it entertaining, exploring what happens when the wrong person is pushed into such a powerful position without the proper mannerisms and ego to do so.

While this film certainly isn’t for everyone, I found myself enjoying quite a lot. On my personal scale I would rate this movie a low four out of five stars. However, if you aren’t inherently interested in the director, or what the film is depicting, I still think it’s worth checking out as you might enjoy the weirdness it offers.



Courtesy of Google Images

Movie poster for Ridely Scott's, *Napoleon*

The Killer Review

by Luke Polomoscanik

The Killer, the latest film from director David Fincher was released onto Netflix in November. It follows a hit man, played by Michael Fassbender, who has to clean his name and situation after a hit gone wrong.



Courtesy of Google Images

David Fincher's *The Killer*

Before I get into the positives and negatives of the review, I want to preface that David Fincher is my favorite director. *The Social Network* and *Zodiac* are some of my favorite films of all time, and this film was one of my most anticipated of the year and my number one for the last quarter of the year. Therefore, my expectations for this film were much higher than the average person going into it.

Even with heightened expectations, I still very much enjoyed the film. What made the film so enjoyable was the way that it was structured. The film is separated into six chapters of this character’s journey and each chapter acts as almost its own short film with stakes and motives that are very easy to understand. For example, chapter 3 finds the hit man going back to New Orleans, where he has to sneak into the building in which his boss works. The chapter is filled with intrigue as you watch him use different tactics to not only get in the building but to negotiate a way out of the trouble he has found himself in. However, all of the chapters have this sense of intrigue and thrills to them.

Another aspect of a film like this that it has work is its violence. While this film doesn’t have a lot of it, the violence it does have is brutal in just the right ways. The previously mentioned chapter 3 has a

brutal kill with a power tool while chapter 4 has a very long, brutal, and property drawn out fight inside of a house that is the antithesis of the fight choreography found in movies such as *John Wick: Chapter 4* that released earlier this year.

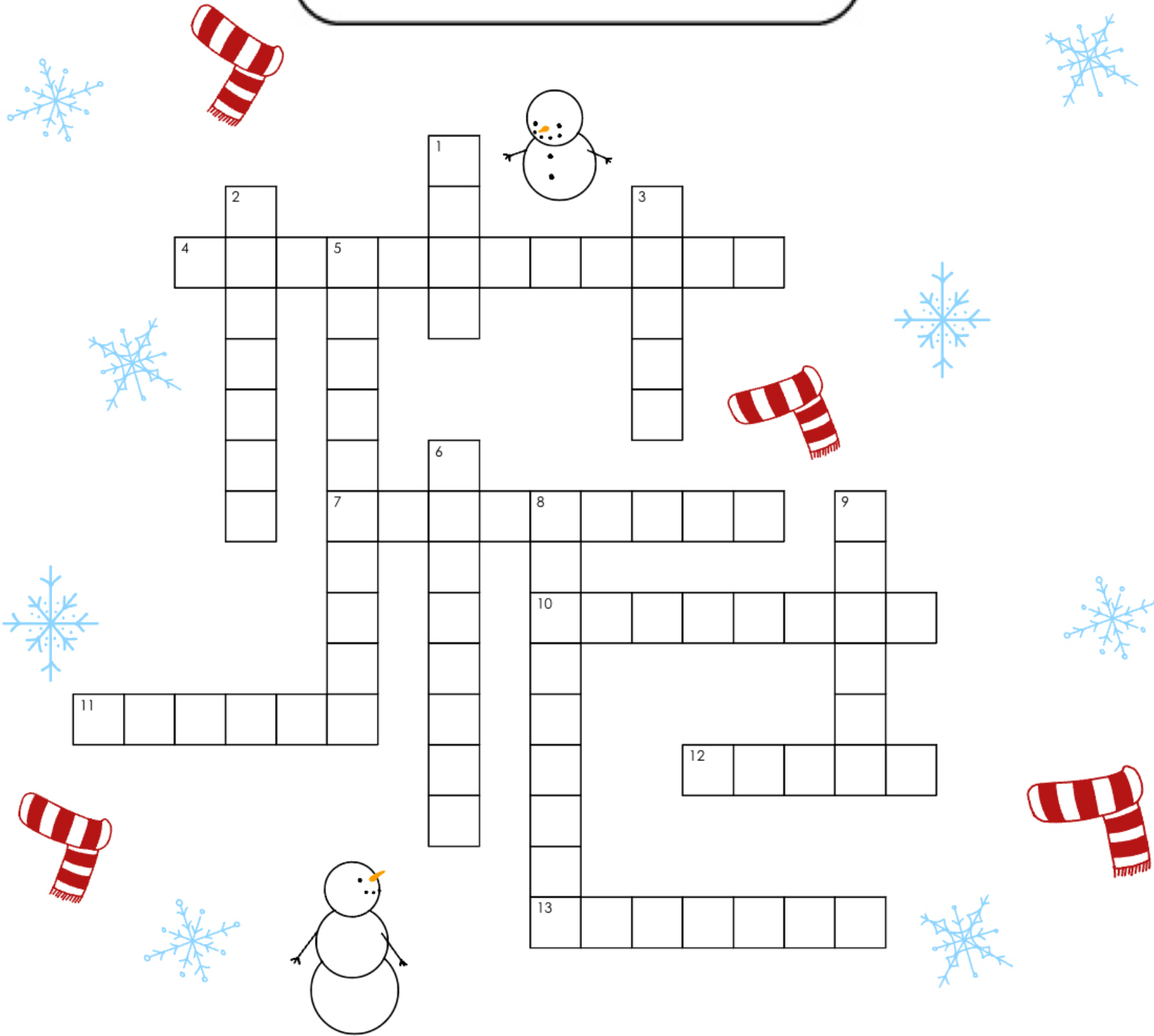
Michael Fassbender, who plays the lead hit man in the movie, is able to bring a lot of emotion to a character who is supposed to be “emotionless.” His internal struggle of being a logical character in the beginning vs an emotional one throughout the film is felt all throughout the entire runtime, and it makes him a much easier character for the audience to follow.

While all of these aspects make the movie certainly great, I wouldn’t call it a new favorite or the very best of the year. That is due to the fact that this story is familiar. While it’s very well directed, written, and acted, it’s not something that I will remember for its story, which is what the very best David Fincher movies do.

That is my only real negative feeling towards the film and it does feel a little unfair as I’m comparing it to some of my favorites of all time.

Out of my scale of 5, I would score this movie a very strong 4/5, and I would highly recommend it to anyone.

Winter Crossword



Across: →

- 4. Hot beverage made of primarily chocolate
- 7. Jesus's birthday
- 10. Things you have on Christmas trees
- 11. Clothing to keep your hands warm
- 12. Clothing to put around your neck
- 13. Snow balls stacked on top of each other

Down: ↓

- 1. White powdery substance from the sky
- 2. Baked goods to leave out for santa
- 3. Man who delivers presents
- 5. Red and white sweets
- 6. Things you receive and buy for Christmas
- 8. You can find gifts in these big socks
- 9. Season after fall

Winter Word search

O	C	S	O	C	F	Z	T	M	Y	Z	S	Y	V	C	S	W	V
G	Q	A	R	G	P	S	W	I	N	T	E	R	S	H	N	J	J
L	M	N	N	H	F	S	N	O	C	E	C	Z	C	E	O	N	A
O	P	T	A	D	O	I	S	E	V	H	C	J	A	S	W	X	C
V	C	A	M	M	Y	Z	R	N	W	J	R	D	R	T	F	K	K
E	O	B	E	K	K	C	H	E	O	Y	F	I	F	N	L	Z	E
S	L	Q	N	B	R	E	A	K	P	W	E	O	S	U	O	D	T
M	D	I	T	A	K	Q	T	N	D	L	M	A	M	T	R	Q	Y
R	H	X	S	S	W	E	A	T	E	R	A	A	R	S	M	X	I
N	P	C	O	O	K	I	E	S	T	K	E	C	N	S	F	A	R
A	S	C	P	R	E	S	E	N	T	S	W	Q	E	B	F	A	S
H	O	T	C	H	O	C	O	L	A	T	E	T	R	E	E	U	T

Find the following words in the puzzle.
Words are hidden ➡ ⬇ and ↘ .

BREAK
CANDYCANE
CHESTNUTS
CHRISTMAS
COLD
COOKIES
FIREPLACE
GLOVES



HAT
HOT CHOCOLATE
JACKET
NEW YEARS
ORNAMENTS
PRESENTS
SANTA
SCARF



SNOW
SNOWMAN
SWEATER
TREE
WINTER



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