

Holiday traditions abroad

The Hill News takes a look at the customs and traditions of some of our international students

Waiting for 'Tomten'

By Anna Strand
Sixth Form

Christmas is without a doubt my favorite holiday, especially because my family in Sweden and I celebrate it in exactly same way every year.

Christmas in Sweden starts with the Advent, the wait for Jesus. The symbol is the Advent candlestick. We light one candle on each of the four Sundays before Christmas. These candlesticks are very popular and most families have one in each window! Of course we also have the Advent Calendars, in which we open one "door" every day until Christmas Eve on the 24th.

On TV there is a daily Advent Calendar Show which everyone watches. Last week my mom sent me my favorite one from 1994, *Sune's*

In the porridge there is a hidden almond, and the person who gets it is said to get married in the next year.

Christmas, so I now begin every day by watching a new episode!

On December 13 we celebrate the Saint Lucia, a tradition that started about 1400 years ago. All over Sweden children wake up early in the morning to dress up, sing and surprise their parents with coffee, gingerbreads and "lussekatter". One girl is chosen to represent Lucia herself, wearing a white gown with a red ribbon around her waist and a crown of leaves from lingonberry topped with nine candles. The other girls



Anna dressed as St. Lucia in a white robe and a lingonberry leaf crown topped with nine candles

dress up as "tärnor" wearing the same outfit without the crown but instead holding candlesticks in their hands. Boys may dress up as "star boys," wearing a white gown and pointed hat adorned with stars. The group of children sings a number of songs and reads different poems.

Unlike most other countries, we regard Christmas Eve as the most important day of Christmas. In my family we each wake up to a small present in our socks. After we have opened our presents, we go into Stockholm and ice skate in Kungsparken. At in the afternoon the whole family gathers and the celebration begins with watching Donald Duck and other Disney cartoons on TV for an hour. It might sound a little strange, but for Swedish people there is no real Christmas without watching this show! After the show, we have our Christmas dinner which we call "Julbord". This consists of

Christmas ham, meatballs, little sausages, potatoes, stock-fish, different kinds of pickled herring, cheese, crisp bread, salmon, "Jansons frestelse", beetroot salad and many other delicacies. This meal is just amazing.

After dinner we wait for Santa Claus, who we call "Tomten". In my family one of my uncles always has to "leave in order to buy the magazine" but "secretly" comes back dressed as Santa handing out our Christmas presents. When everyone has opened their presents we have porridge. This is an important event that you have to be prepared for, since it includes the annual "porridge rhyme". My dad always comes up with the best one and wins. In the porridge there is a hidden almond, and the person who gets it is said to get married in the next year.

On Christmas Day many people go to church early in the morning. In the evening we eat a special kind of fish, lutfisk, and just relax.

Since I am not going home for Christmas, I am definitely going to miss of these traditions; my family, Donald Duck, our Christmas ham, lussekatter, and everything else. But on the other hand, I am really looking forward to experiencing a real American Christmas! Maybe I will be able to introduce something new to my family for next year! God Jul!

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First snow buries Hill campus

Hill students brave the wind and snow to get to class on Friday, December 9, after the seasons first significant snowfall left more than half a foot of accumulation. Students were allowed a dress down day to safely and warmly get around the snow covered campus. See page 6 for more seasonal coverage.

Gender equality at The Hill

Editors Note: When the school first went coed, the SGA elections required the selection of at least one boy and one girl from every form. A number of years ago this "gender quota" was dropped. The SGA recently began reviewing this decision to determine if there is equal representation in the student government.

Quotas harm validity

By Brandon Jacobs
Fifth Form

Imagine you're a student right out of college. You have this great connection at a local law firm where you have just finished the interview. You go back two days later, only to find out that the job was given to a person who was less qualified in every aspect for the job. You are outraged and demand to speak to the manager immediately. He explains to you that it was nothing against you and that you were definitely qualified for the position, but they had to fill a quota. You leave, asking yourself, "How is this fair?"

We are only discussing this issue to make sure that everything is fair. But in reality who would this policy be fair to? It wouldn't allow the students to choose who they want to represent them, could potentially not allow for the best qualified candidate to receive the position, and it degrades the person who actually wins by "default".

"Putting a requirement on SGA for a male or female takes away from it being

Equality needed

By Kiki Fehling
Fifth Form

SGA is an association described in the Hill School's handbook as being a group that "must attempt to be a body which is an accurate cross-section of the School's different interest groups" (6). Girls have become a vital part of this school and get further from being the minority every year. We represent a big part of the school (certainly a significant "interest group"), excelling in all aspects of life at Hill. With girls now being as important to our community as boys, it is only fair that both sexes are represented as equally as possible on SGA.

Equal representation is necessary for the SGA to have all views present during student government meetings. As fifth former Laura Poatsy says, "With several issues here at Hill, the opposite sexes have very different opinions, like the issue of dress code. With this new system, the opinions of each sex will be represented and neither side will be overpowered." Issues involving both sexes, however, are not the only topics addressed by SGA.

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