



# WE A.R.E. SPARTANS

— ACHIEVEMENT RESPECT RESPONSIBILITY EMPATHY —

The IMMS Messenger, Virtual Edition 2

December 14, 2020



## Clinging to fall

With snow in the forecast and winter just days away, the sweet scenes of fall brought by an unusual abundance of sunshine are being savored to their last drops.

*Photo by Ada Geiger, IMMS 6th Grade*

## Pandemic changes some traditions

### IMMS Messenger Staff

While some traditions had to be altered because of the Covid-19 pandemic, some remained. That's according to respondents taking part in the IMMS Messenger Padlet on this year's celebrations. Most of the participants reported that turkey was still on their menus for holiday meals. On the other hand, most will be making less food.

Padlet participants shared that they usually have plans to visit with extended family, such as grandparents, great-grandparents, and family friends. Pre-pandemic plans also included travel. These are the traditions that are being the most affected by the quarantine-like conditions.

Instead, respondents shared, they will cook for immediate family and call their grandparents.

# Gratitude given among hardships for 400 years

By Rachel Stolyarov  
IMMS 6th Grade

In September 1620, the Mayflower left Plymouth, England. It had 102 passengers who all had their reasons for leaving England and journeying to the New World. Some of these reasons were that people wanted religious freedom to worship who they chose. Others wanted to leave England because of the promise of prosperity and land ownership.

This voyage lasted 66 long days, which were full of excitement, sickness, weeping, and joy. When finally their voyage was completed, they anchored near the tip of Cape Cod, which was far north of their intended destination, the mouth of the Hudson River. One month later, the Mayflower sailed across the Massachusetts Bay, and the Pilgrims set about establishing a village. However, even after reaching their destination, the Pilgrims continued to suffer. A treacherous winter proved itself to be almost deadly. Only a half of the Mayflower's original passengers were left in the spring.

In March, the settlers continued to move ashore and were astonished to be visited by a Native American who spoke English.

This Native American named Squanto taught the

Pilgrims who were strangers to this cruel New World many things that they needed to survive. Some of these many things were how to grow crops such as corn, catch fish in the rivers and what plants were poisonous. Squanto also helped the Pilgrims in forging an alliance with the Wampanoag tribe, this alliance lasted more than 50 years and was the sole alliance between the European colonists and the Native Americans.

In November 1621, the Pilgrims first corn harvest was successful, and to celebrate Governor William Bradford organized a feast and invited Native Americans including the Wampanoag tribe. This feast lasted three days and is now known as the First Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving day is a national holiday now, but it wasn't always one. It wasn't till 1863 in the midst of the Civil War when President Abraham Lincoln declared Thanksgiving a national holiday.

So when you think of Thanksgiving no matter how you are celebrating this year, think back to the Pilgrims and their First Thanksgiving, and let your heart be filled with thanks and gratitude. The Pilgrims had many hardships, but they fought through the storm and sailed into the sunshine.

You can read more about the origins of Thanksgiving by visiting [History.com](http://History.com).



## Sharing cheer for all

IMMS sixth-grader Colette Foster contributed this drawing, offering happy winter wishes to the entire school no matter what holidays you celebrate or not.

## Fake vs. real: Tree preference often based on tradition

By Ada Geiger  
IMMS 6th Grade

If you celebrate Christmas, and you are thinking about getting a tree this year, but you don't quite know which type to get, or if you don't celebrate Christmas, you can all still look at some pro's and con's of fake and real Christmas trees!

So, you could go the traditional route and pick a real Christmas tree. It is more efficient because you dispose of it every year, and you wouldn't need a permanent storage space for it in your house. And you get more of a variety of trees that all look different, so you can pick the perfect one! It also fills your house with a nice pine aroma. But, transportation and disposal of a real Christmas tree can be quite a hassle; plus, it sheds pine needles that can be quite coarse and prickly. It also needs daily maintenance and, if not cared for correctly, can dry up and become very flammable.

So, now that you have heard about the pro's and con's of a real Christmas tree, let's talk about a fake one.

A fake Christmas tree is better for the environment so that you aren't cutting down a living tree every year. It is also less prickly and easier to decorate. Though some come with lights already on it, you can still easily hang ornaments on it.



Photo by Ada Geiger

A fake Christmas tree also doesn't shed pine needles and doesn't smell, so if you're allergic to pine, a fake Christmas tree won't affect you at all.

They also are way less flammable than a real Christmas tree. But getting a fake Christmas tree might mean you have to assemble and disassemble it every year and find a storage space for it in your home when it's not the holidays.

Now, it might be all about the family tradition of going to get a fresh tree or hanging up ornaments on your artificial tree. It's really just about what's special to you and your family.

So whatever one you choose, Happy Holidays!



### Snow play

Colette Foster shares this photo, called Pipy's Snow Day, taken earlier this year.

## Book Talk: Recommending *The School of Good and Evil*

By Kate Mischnick  
IMMS 6th Grade

Today's book talk is about the riveting story *The School of Good and Evil*, created and written by Soman Chainani. It is the first book in a fascinating series about Fairy Tale heroes and villains that were once real people.

*The School of Good and Evil* starts with two girls, complete opposites, who end up accidentally switching places in the schools. As they search for a way to change back to their chosen school, the pair meets the School Master, who tells them it is impossible to switch schools. Neither girl really believes him. But they still have classes and assignments to complete. And now there is a prince, as well. What would the prince say, if he knew the villain he loved was cheating? Can the princess in a witch's clothing win them both a kiss and return home? Or are they finally where they were meant to be in *The School of Good and Evil*? Find out in *The School of Good and Evil* by Soman Chainani. It can be found in our school library and the E.D. Locke Public Library, as well. Happy reading!



# Two recipes for the holidays or any days

Everyone loves something sweet to brighten up their day, especially when approaching winter holidays. Look no further, the IMMS staff has brought you all the easy recipes you will need to fill your house with holiday cheer.



*Photo by Rachel Stolyarov*

## HOLIDAY KISSES

Making these simple cookies is practically effortless! All that you will need is an appetite and these ingredients:

- Hershey Kisses
- circle pretzels
- M&Ms

### Directions:

1. First Preheat the oven to - 400 degrees Fahrenheit
2. Next get out cookie sheets and either spray them with nonstick baking spray, or line them with parchment paper; the more the cookie sheets, the more the cookies!
3. Now bring out your pretzels and put them on the cookie sheet; put as many as you can. It is all right if they are touching. Just don't stack them.
4. After the pretzels are on the baking sheet bring out those yummy Hershey Kisses! Put one Hershey Kiss on top of each pretzel. You can use peppermint Hershey Kisses if you want.
5. Now put your cookie sheets with your pretzels and Hershey Kisses in the oven for 5 minutes, only heat one cookie sheet at a time.
6. When done, take the cookie sheets out of the oven and onto cooling surface, warning they will be hot. Quickly grab your M&Ms and place one onto each slightly melted Hershey Kiss. The Hershey Kiss should be at just the right texture so that you can drop them on! Repeat this process until you have all your M&Ms on your Hershey Kisses.
7. Let your mini cookies set for a while. When hard, this is a tasty treat to enjoy!

~Rachel Stolyarov



*Photo by Rachel Stolyarov*

## BANANA BREAD

This Banana Bread is so easy to make and is one of my favorites!

~Rachel  
Stolyarov

### Ingredients:

- 1 stick (½ cup) butter
- 3 large ripe bananas (OK if overripe)
- 2 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups All Purpose flour (I find it OK to use whole wheat flour)
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon

### Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Make sure to spray your pan (loaf pan) with nonstick cooking spray or grease with butter.
2. Put the stick of butter into a large bowl and microwave until melted (about 50 seconds).
3. Add the bananas to the bowl with butter, and mash with a fork (usually takes 15 minutes to 30 minutes).
4. Add vanilla extract and eggs to the bowl and use the same fork to mash until no streaks of yellow remain.
5. In a second large bowl, whisk together the flour, sugar, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon. (Make sure your bowl is large enough; otherwise, the dry ingredients will fly out when you mix.)
6. Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients, and mix with a spatula just until combined. (Pour in the dry ingredients slowly so they don't miss the bowl.)
7. Pour the batter into the loaf pan that you prepared, and bake in the oven for 45- 50 minutes, until a toothpick comes out clean.
8. Cool and enjoy!



## Spirit Contest winners

**Above:** In second place, Evie Vidrio captures the moment she discovered Snickerdoodle cookies after a December play, in which she acted as princess.

**Below:** In first place, Michael Burke shares a cup of hot chocolate at his grandparents' kitchen island, representing one of his family's December traditions.



## Battle of the Books ends in a tie

By Sofia Bexson  
IMMS Grade 8

Thank you to everyone who participated in voting for the top book in the IMMS Library for 2020. The books of choice -- *Guts* by Raina Telgemeier and *The Raft* by S.A. Bodeen -- are so popular that it is no surprise that the vote came out in a tie. Both books are equally so good that a favorite could not be picked.

*The Raft* has become more popular in the seventh grade, but even the many seventh-graders were equally divided between this book and *Guts*. One draw to *The Raft* is that it is sometimes fun to fantasize about what if. What if you survived a plane wreck and get stranded in the middle of the ocean? In *The Raft*, the character Robie is an experienced traveler, has to get from Honolulu to the Midway Atoll in a hurry, so she gets on a last-minute cargo flight. She knows the pilot, but on this flight, there's a new co-pilot named Max. All systems are go until a storm hits, the engine cuts out, and Max shouts at her to put on a life jacket. They are over miles of Pacific Ocean. She sees Max struggle with a raft. And then . . . she's in the water. Max pulls her onto the raft, and that's when the real terror begins. They have no water. Their only food is a bag of Skittles. There are sharks. There is an island. But there's no sign of help on the way.

On the other side, *Guts* is relatable to so many people, not just kids and teens. Some things that were said about *Guts*: "It's graphic novel." The format is definitely popular. The book features the story of Raina, who wakes up one night with a terrible upset stomach. Her mom has one, too, so it's probably just a bug. Raina eventually returns to school, where she's dealing with the usual highs and lows: friends, not-friends, and classmates who think the school year is just one long gross-out session. It soon becomes clear that Raina's tummy trouble isn't going away . . . and it coincides with her worries about food, school, and changing friendships. What's going on?

Again, both books are so good so you should definitely read (and reread) them both, if you haven't already.

# Wasps are important for us, too

By Ada Geiger  
IMMS 6th Grade

I bet you probably didn't know that wasps are just as important as bees are!

Though wasps don't get much credit for it, they perform some of the same duties as bees. Wasps don't make honey, but they do pollinate over 100 different types of flowers, and without them those flowers would be in trouble!

Let me ask you a question: *Do you like figs?* Because if you do, you should also consider liking wasps, too.

You might be asking me right now, **"Why in the world should I like wasps?!"**

Well, wasps also play a main role in pollinating fig trees; different types of fig trees depend on the same type of fig wasps to pollinate them! So, if there weren't any wasps, you could wave goodbye to your Fig Newtons! Not having figs also would be a big problem to the ecosystems around the U.S. Even though Wisconsin doesn't really grow figs, lots of other states do, and that means the animals in those states also eat figs! Figs are the main food source to lots of animals, and without them the animals would die of starvation or choose a different main food source that would soon be gone due to over eating it.

Now, you might not care about wasps and figs, so what if I told you wasps play an important role in the Wisconsin ecosystems, too! Unlike bees, wasps are key predators; they kill and hunt lots of pests and harmful bugs that could hurt our plants and gardens, let alone crops! Researchers in the

U.K. say that wasps hunt about 30 million pounds of insects a year! (14 million Kg), And that's just in the U.S! Without wasps, many of our plants would be left unprotected!

Now, you might be thinking, "We should care more about bees because the bee population has gone down because wasps are hunting them!" And if that wasn't what you were thinking, congrats. But if you *were* thinking that, then have I got some information for you!

Bee populations have gone down not because of wasps but because of pesticides, climate change, and change of land use, like forestry and construction. Yeah you guessed it, HUMANS! And wasp populations are also decreasing just like bees; people just don't seem to care about wasps as much as bees.

Also, have you ever heard of a "bee or wasp trap"? You might have one in your yard or your neighbor might have one; maybe there's one in your neighborhood park or path. You might be thinking, "Oh, no biggy."

Though wasp and bee traps are very effective, did you know a dying wasp gives off a chemical to tell other wasps to come and help it? So yeah, it works, but it also just attracts them and makes them mad. I also wouldn't understand why you would want to kill the thing that helps your vegetable garden grow in the summer and helps your favorite potted flower blossom in the spring.

So maybe next time you go to put out your wasp catcher or go to swat one outside, rethink the whole scary wasp with a big stinger concept, and think about how much good the misunderstood creature called the wasp does for you.

## IMMS Fall Messenger Staff and Contributors

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