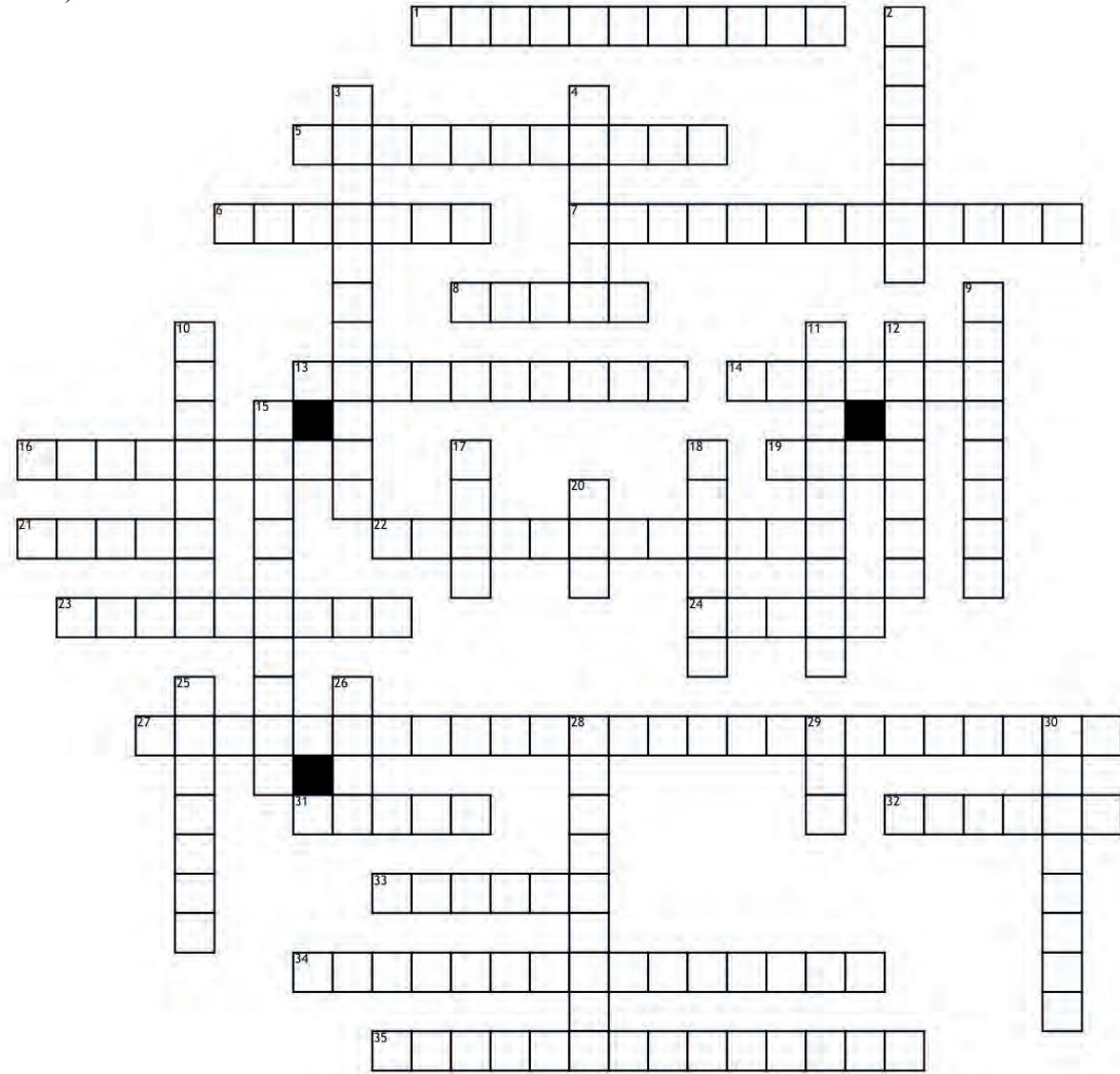


Crossword

BY: JED GIZA '26



Across:

1. The first Christmas carol ever broadcast on radio
5. Who was born on Christmas?
6. Angel that appeared to Mary
7. This religious event is celebrated by Christians on Dec. 25
8. This traditional Christmas drink is flavored with citrus and served hot
13. _____ is coming to town
14. City where Kevin McCallister lives
16. Donald Trump cameos in the sequel to this Christmas classic
19. This guided the Wise Men to Jesus
21. The Grinch's heart grew this many sizes
22. Gift given to Jesus

23. Jesus was born here
24. Closest place to ski
27. Most listened to Christmas song
31. There are four main food groups in "Elf": candy, candy canes, candy corn and _____
32. Religious season for Christians leading up to Christmas
33. The animal that is often depicted beside the manger
34. Fab Forties is known for this during Christmas
35. Author of "A Christmas Carol"

Down:

2. The creator of "How the Grinch Stole Christmas"
3. Classic spokesperson for Sprite Cranberry

4. A representation of the Nativity scene
9. Sock hung on a mantel
10. Jesus of _____
11. Meet me under the _____
12. Faculty member whose name resembles the type of song sung during Christmas
15. A Christmas plant also known as a "Christmas flower"
17. This band made the hit song "Last Christmas"
18. A winter holiday decoration made by weaving flowers, leaves, and branches
20. An evergreen tree that are often used as Christmas trees
25. Faculty member found on the cover of *The Plank*
26. Mother of Jesus
28. Holiday candy shaped like a hook
29. The Grinch's loyal dog
30. A decorative object on Christmas trees



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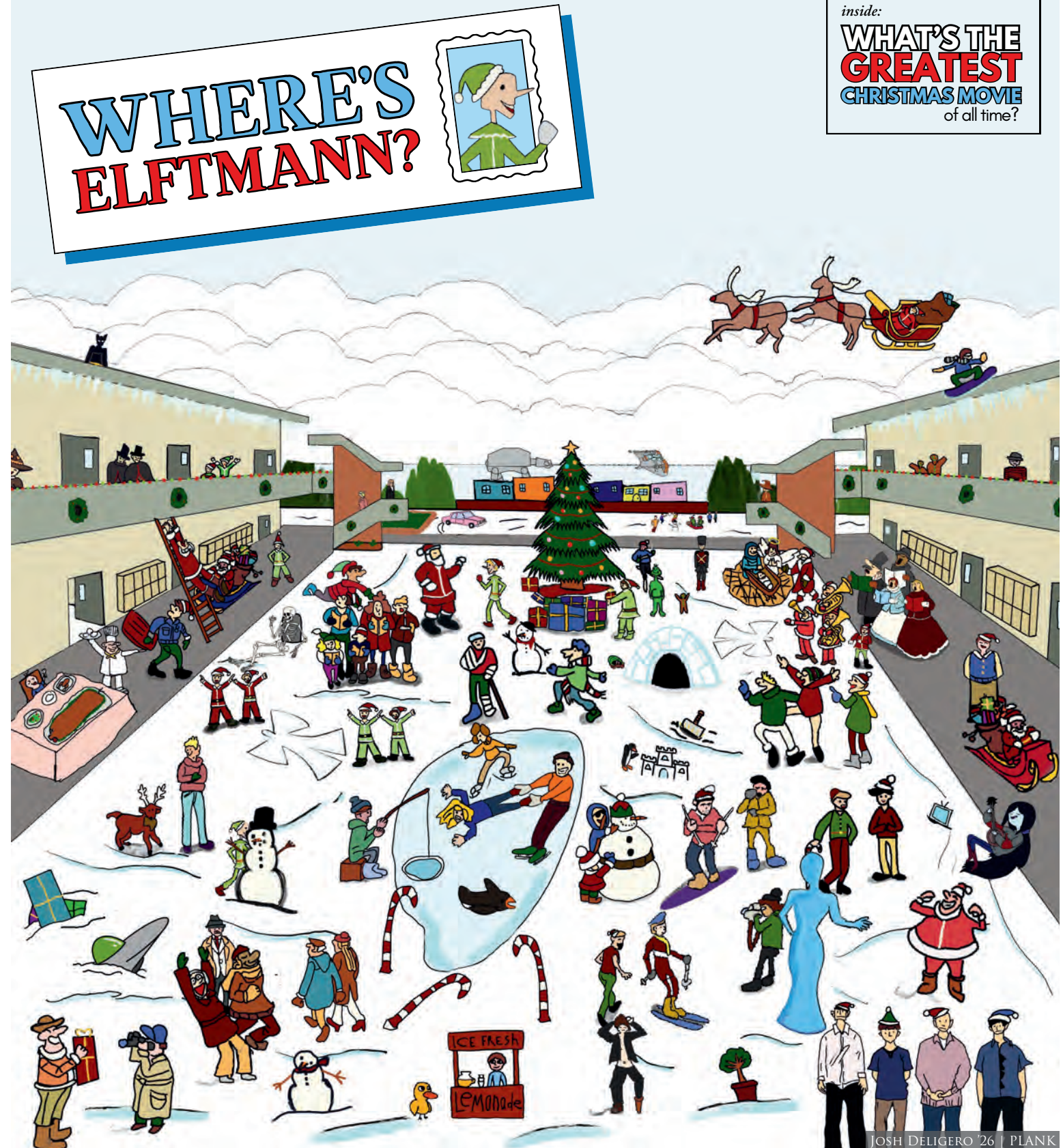
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THE PLANK

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inside:
WHAT'S THE GREATEST CHRISTMAS MOVIE
of all time?



FROSTY THE SNOWMAN

BY: LUKE PRYOR '25

Frosty the Snowman can hang his magic hat on being the titular character of one of the greatest Christmas anthems of all time, but that isn't the only way the jolly, happy soul is remembered. His trademark corn-cob pipe, button nose, and eyes of coal are immortalized in the 1969 television special "Frosty the Snowman," a movie that to this day remains the quintessential Christmas story.

The movie is a fully wrapped and decorated Christmas present complete with timeless animation, an abundant supply of holiday wonder, and a powerful story that reinforces the ideas and themes at the very heart of the Christmas Spirit.

The film centers around the story of a lovable snowman who wants to bring joy and Christmas cheer to children as he tries to escape the inevitable spring thaw. Frosty's generosity is shown to be morally superior to the pathetic greed of the magician, the antagonist of the film.

Over the course of his adventure, Frosty also teaches his audience that even though the holiday season will end, Frosty – and by extension the magic of Christmas – will continue to spread holiday cheer year after year for generations to come. These themes of generosity, happiness, and hope are the heart and soul of the Christmas season.

No other story can capture the Christmas Spirit in the same way that "Frosty the Snowman" does, nor combine it with the tear-jerking story and profound lessons in such a concise package. Thus, "Frosty the Snowman" reigns supreme as the greatest Christmas film of all time.



HOME ALONE

BY: MATIN SAYAREH '25

John Hughes's "Home Alone" isn't just a cinematic masterpiece; it's the ideal that every Christmas movie should strive for.

In addition to the perfect casting and elegantly-crafted plot, "Home Alone" is the best model for a Christmas film because of its interplay between the realistic and the unrealistic. Christmas is a time of hope and joy. To portray this, most films choose one of the two styles: realistic or supernatural, mundane nostalgia or magic Santa. What makes "Home Alone" so great is that it can do both. While it allows for the absurd, it does so in a way that seems legitimate. Although Kevin McCallister's luck is improbable, it's not otherworldly.

For instance, the iconic and memorable climax of the story is when the Wet Bandits attempt to rob Kevin's house while he's home alone. The traps that Kevin designs are so seemingly lethal that they defy all logic: how does an iron falling from the second story of his house onto someone's head not kill them? But it is exactly these contradictions that make this film so great: absurdity is funny. The only way that the traps functioned as Kevin intended was due to an incredible amount of luck. However, his luck wasn't impossible, supernatural, or magical.

Along with Kevin's fascinating traps, the whole plot is unique and engaging. The idea of an imaginative eight-year-old being left at home by his family and stalked for a robbery sets the tone for an incredibly bizarre yet eerily possible story.

There is no doubt that "Home Alone" hits all the marks when it comes to being the best Christmas movie. Its stellar cast and fantastic scenes make every second of the film worth the watch. Whether you're with family, friends, or even by yourself, "Home Alone" is a film that doesn't disappoint.



NATIONAL LAMPOON'S CHRISTMAS VACATION

BY: AIDEN THOMAS '27

"National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation" will forever be the most legendary Christmas movie. The comedic and chaotic Griswold family perfectly depicts the lighthearted Christmas spirit within the film.

The Griswolds are a young family in the Chicago area preparing for a picturesque "Perfect Christmas." During this hectic time, their eccentric cousins arrive unannounced in their run-down motorhome.

Clark Griswold, the father, intends to surprise his family with a swimming pool using his company's annual Christmas bonus. Unfortunately, Christmas Eve goes awry for the Griswold family when Clark's annual bonus is scrapped.

But by the end of the night, his bonus gets reinstated after Cousin Eddie kidnaps Clark's boss. Ultimately, the night ends in celebration, as the family unites underneath an exploding Santa Claus lawn ornament lighting up the night.

The acting and visuals make the film spectacular. Characters like Cousin Eddie and Aunt Bethany always garner a laugh and each member of the cast plays their role beautifully, immersing the audience into the movie. The limited use of CGI and the inclusion of real animals, fireworks, and explosions makes for a far better, genuine experience.

National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation illustrates how the Christmas spirit and love pushes through any setbacks. Through its incredible plot, amusing characters, and heartwarming message, this movie easily takes the cake for the best Christmas movie out there.



HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS

BY: LUCAS DARLING '26

Ron Howard's "How The Grinch Stole Christmas (2000)" remains one of the strongest Christmas movies ever. The film is well-regarded by many for its acting, practical effects, whimsical costumes, and heartwarming story of redemption.

Jim Carrey carries the movie on his shoulders. His role as the Grinch strikes the perfect balance between cruelty and humor. His natural charisma translates nicely into playing a greedy and evil character. He is the most memorable part of the entire movie, and his role cements this movie as a classic.

The practical effects of the movie are another standout aspect. The set feels like Whoville, which elicits a feeling that evokes the best part of childhood: wonder about the surrounding world. The world feels fantastical, yet completely real.

The costume designs are immaculate as well. I'd argue that Carrey's Grinch costume is one of the most impressive and iconic costumes of all time. In fact, the costumes of every actor seamlessly fits the world that Howard presents perfecting the visuals of the film.

Beyond these elements, the movie would still be remembered as a Christmas great if only for the story, which is not only funny but also heartwarming. The jokes land, and land often. The film is most remembered for its hopeful message that people can change for the better. And what's more emblematic of the Christmas spirit than that?



elf

BY: AIDEN DALIDA '26

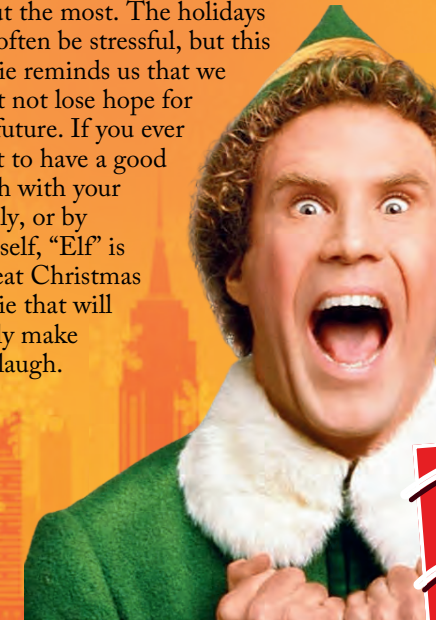
In 2003, Buddy the elf stole the hearts of millions with his quirky sense of humor and contagious holiday spirit. Jon Favreau's "Elf" is a heartwarming story that truly encapsulates the Christmas spirit.

This film is about Buddy, who crawled into Santa's bag as a baby and was adopted by one of Santa's elves. Eventually, Buddy longs to be reunited with his human family, so he goes back to New York in search of his father. Buddy makes it to New York City, finds his father, and gets into wacky adventures while helping his father and his human family discover the true meaning of Christmas.

The casting is incredible, especially with Will Ferrell playing the main character, Buddy the elf. Ferrell's charm and humor brings out Buddy's sense of childlike wonder and naivete about the human world. The casting of James Caan as Buddy's human father, Walter, is also spot on. Walter's pessimistic attitude plays the perfect foil to Buddy's childlike wonder.

The biggest standout in the movie is definitely its humor which can be fully enjoyed by people of all ages with a variety of jokes. Ranging from visual gags, to cringe comedy, to slapstick, this movie supplies laughs the whole way through. These jokes come across perfectly, due to the timing and delivery by Ferrell and Caan.

The story shows the true meaning of Christmas. It discusses the importance of family and hope during the Christmas season. Christmas is a time for us to spend time with the people that we love and care about the most. The holidays can often be stressful, but this movie reminds us that we must not lose hope for the future. If you ever want to have a good laugh with your family, or by yourself, "Elf" is a great Christmas movie that will surely make you laugh.



A CHRISTMAS STORY

BY: NICK RYAN '26

There are many elements required to make a great Christmas movie, but there are two elements that stand above the rest: nostalgia and humor. And no Christmas movie is more nostalgic and humorous than "A Christmas Story." For this reason, I believe it's the best Christmas movie of all time.

"A Christmas Story" is a well-made movie that covers all the universal childhood experiences. Whether it's standing up for yourself, being annoyed by a sibling, getting punished by your parents, or annoying your dad while trying to help him work on something, almost everyone can relate to this film in one way or another.

The other element of "A Christmas Story" that puts it above the rest is the humor woven into every scene and plot line throughout the movie. There is always going to be something funny about "the Bumpus Hounds" next door, or the sticky situation Ralphie's friend gets into with the metal pole at recess. The hilariously chaotic childhood rush of Christmas – the anxious parents, shenanigans with friends, and hopes of presents, – is perfectly depicted in the film, making "A Christmas Story" inimitable in its Christmas mastery.

No Christmas tale is as real and down-to-earth as Ralphie's, and because of that, I cannot get through the Christmas season without watching this film at least once. For these reasons, "A Christmas Story" has my bid for the greatest Christmas movie ever.

