

Hopewell Hi-Lites

1215 Longvue Avenue, Hopewell, PA

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SANTA WISHLIST

BY: MEGHAN PARRISH



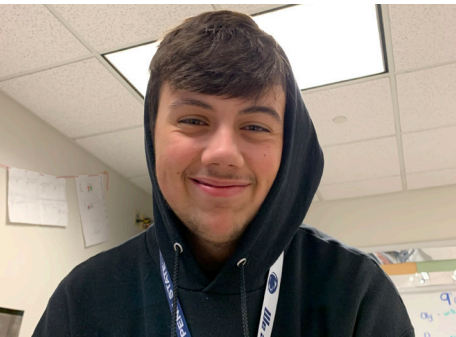
Chris Mullens: Hot Wheels.



Officer Rodgers: Black tactical crocs.



Vianna Walton: A puppy.



Layton Hall: Uggs, Fortnite Nerf guns, and a Steelers jersey.



Jordan Gillette: Starwars Lego set and lightsaber.



Samantha Duffy: Fake tan and all of the Sims 4 expansion packs.



Jayla Kirkwood: A car.



Jacob McGovern: A new fishing rod.



Patricia Butcher: Pink and purple Play-doh.

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Festivus Fun

BY: AUBRYANNA SCRANTON

The chattering of the auditorium slowly dies down and suddenly all eyes are on you; the stage is yours and you prepare to give the greatest live performance of Mariah Carey's *All I Want for Christmas is You*. Can you picture it? You're the star of this year's Festivus.

For those who don't know, *Festivus* originated on *Seinfeld*. It is an alternate Christmas celebration in order to be a "non-commercial holiday." It takes place on December 23rd and involves Festivus dinner, an aluminum pole in place of a Christmas tree, and practices such as the "airing of grievances" and "feats of strength".

Here at Hopewell, however, it's the school's annual Christmas concert the last day before break. Still fairly new, the teachers put together a performance that includes acts from teachers and students, and all grades gathering in the auditorium to watch the Christmas lipdub. The idea started when the school's assistant principal, Mr. Rowe, figured there were more exciting ways to spend the last day of school before the holiday. "It's something fun to do, you know? There's no point in just sitting in classes for nine minutes and then moving on... it's a waste of a day. So rather than just sit around why not do something that's fun?"

Now, the school's Festivus

concert has become somewhat of a tradition. Many teachers have participated, even those who have no prior musical experiences. For instance, Mr. Mohrbacher, a ninth grade English teacher, has performed in past Festivus concerts with no vocal training and only basic guitar skills. Nevertheless, he's not afraid to go onstage and have a good time. "I think Festivus is an opportunity for us to have fun as a school district. I just try to be a good sport and not take myself too seriously... show students another side of myself, embarrass myself really, but really just go out and have fun."

As mentioned, teachers

aren't the only ones allowed to put on a show. Student bands and solo performers are welcomed and even encouraged to participate. Some students may recall a band called Night Frog performing a few years back. Meghan Parrish, a senior, remembers audience members enjoying the show and simply having a good time. "They were actually really good...it was awesome everybody loved Night Frog."

So far, this year's Festivus is still in rehearsal, however it's sure to be a fun time and students can expect great things



Ways to Care

BY: PAYTON ROCK

Christmas is right around the corner and you may be hoping for the newest phone or a shiny bike. However, not everyone asks for those luxuries. Children all over the world look under their Christmas trees and find little to nothing. Their Christmas lists consist of socks, gloves, and maybe a coloring book. So instead of receiving, why not give to those who need it most? In the list below are some ways to show kindness this Christmas.

Offer Your Help

You don't have to donate a million dollars to make a difference. Any act of kindness can go a long way. Maybe you have some extra time, go around and shovel up snow to help out. Perhaps you know a single-parent in your neighborhood- offer to babysit while he or she goes Christmas shopping or to a Christmas party.

Volunteer

Many charities are looking for extra volunteers around this time. In particular, charities for homeless and elderly who need help with preparing and serving Christmas meals. Even if you have just a few hours to spare, your help could make a difference in someone's life this Christmas by showing them that you care. For example...

- Operation Santa

This Christmas, show care to the kids who sent letters to Santa. Go to

the website below and make a kid's day by answering it.

<https://www.uspsoperationsanta.com/>

- Wrapping Presents

Building Strong Foundations Inc. has an opportunity for volunteers to come and make a difference in a child's life this Holiday Season through assisting with gift wrapping and packaging. Go to 5018 Dearborn St. Pittsburgh, PA 15225 to make a kid's Christmas brighter.

Donate

If you're unable to volunteer, you can still donate items to the charities of your choice. Such as money, gifts, or food. For example...

-Local Food Bank

When doing your Christmas grocery shopping, buy a little extra and donate it to your local food bank. It could help a family enjoy Christmas despite their financial difficulties. Or visit the website for the Pittsburgh Food Bank and donate.

www.pittsburghfoodbank.org

- Toys for Tots

Toys for Tots, sponsored by the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, gives out toys to children whose parent(s) cannot afford to give them gifts this Christmas. Go to their website and donate so those kids can have a spectacular Christmas.

<https://www.toysfortots.org>

- Salvation Army

Salvation Army is an international charitable organization that donates

all year but for the holidays you can specifically make a kid's Christmas cheery and bright. Brighten a kid's holiday by going to their website and donating.

<https://www.salvationarmyusa.org/usn/brighten-the-holidays>

- Operation Christmas Child

Samaritan's Purse, a nondenominational Christian organization. It provides aid to those who are suffering and provides a way to show you care this Christmas. Go to the website below and pack a shoebox for a kid in need.

<https://www.samaritanspurse.org/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/>

- One Simple Wish

One Simple Wish is an organization that donates and gives to children and young adults that are impacted by foster care, abuse, and neglect. Go to the website below and buy something for a kid in need. No need to buy something random and drive to some location, just buy it right there and then.

<https://www.onesimplewish.org>

Look for ways to show other people you care about this year. Your time and assistance, maybe in your own family, will be gratefully received and you may even make a huge difference to another person's life this Christmas if you show them that someone cares.



Hi-Lites Staff

AUBRYANNA SCRANTON



This is Aubryanna's first year in journalism. Her favorite holiday activity is eating Christmas dinner with her family. Aubryanna is 1 of 5 kids. Her favorite color is black.

MADISON LUKE

KAIDYN PLOPI



This is Kaidyn's first year in journalism. Her favorite holiday activity is eating Christmas dinner. She has been in high honors her whole life. Her favorite color is pink or neon green.

MEGHAN PARRISH

MADI PASCIA



This is Madi Pascia's first year in journalism. Her favorite holiday activity is baking cookies with mom. Her secret talent is that she can play the piano. Her favorite color is black.

NADIA REYNA



This is Maddie's second year in journalism. Her favorite holiday activity is etting up the tree. In her free time she likes to workout. Maddie's favorite color is purple

OLIVIA GUZMA



Meghan is a 1st-year journalism student. Her favorite holiday activity is buying christmas presents for friends. Her secret talent is saying the alphabet backwards in 1.7 seconds. Her favorite color is black.

REGINA HAFNER



This is Nadia's 1st year of journalism. Her favorite holiday activity is decorating. Her secret talent is talking in a Pikachu voice. Her favorite color is blue.

PAYTON ROCK



Olivia has been in journalism for one year. Olivia's favorite holiday activity is eating breakfast with her family on Christmas. Olivia has a secret string of brown in her eye. Her favorite color is purple.



Freshman Regina Hafner has been in Journalism for one year. Her favorite thing to do during the holiday's is to wrap presents for friends and family. Wallows is her favorite band, and her favorite color is purple.



Payton has been in journalism since the beginning of freshman year. Her favorite holiday activity is decorating the tree with family. Payton is not originally from Pennsylvania. She was born in sunny California. Payton's favorite color is blue.

LEIA DAY



Leia has been in jounalsim for 2 years. Leias favorite holiday activity is baking cookies with her grandma. In her free time Leia likes to focus on photography. Her favorite color is red.

PATRICIA BUTCHER



Patricia has been in Journalism for 2 years She loves going and cutting down the Christmas tree. One of her seret talents is juggling. Her favorite color is green.





Gymnastics Team

BY: OLIVIA GUZMA

Lights shining, fans cheering, and a gold medal draped around your neck. Gymnastics is an outstanding sport, and it takes a great amount of athleticism, agility, and talent. Hopewell usually struggles coming up with a team of gymnasts to participate in the school's gymnastics team. This year, there may not be lots of participants but with what we have, we are sure to bring home something big!

With team members Molly Rose, Meghan Kelly, Emily Pleslusky, Trevor Keriotis, Katie Durkis, and their team manager Zoe Gologram, this year's gymnastics team is going to be spectacular. Hopewell's gymnastics team practices at Monaca Turners Gymnastics Club in Monaca. They practice for about 6 hours a week.

"The gymnastics team in the past years was overall really small. Last year we had four team members but only three were able to compete" says Emily Pleslusky, a member on the team. "This year I'm very happy because we actually have a full team of 6 members which is still small, but we have some good people on the team. We also have a boy on the team which we haven't had a boy in a long time" continued Emily.

These incredibly talented athletes usually attend 13 to 15 gymnastics meets a season. They put in lots of hard work to perfect their complicated and intricate routines. "I think the best event is beam because it shows coordination and balance and you feel ac-

complished after if you did not fall off during the routine" says Emily.

Hopewell High School's gymnastics team is full of gifted and dedicated athletes. "I think we have a strong chance of taking place at one of the bigger meets. We have some strong members, and I hope that this year will be a success" said Emily. It's not a leap of faith to think this team can vault its way to victory this season.





Girls Basketball: Full of Friends

BY MADELINE LUKE

The girls basketball team is closer together than they have ever been. They are going to be using teamwork on the court this year. “We are always laughing and having fun on and off the court,” says senior Siara Conley.

Siara likes basketball because it’s a way to escape from all the stress. “When you’re the one on the court, you only think about that and only that, for the time being. You forget everything else going on in life; the stress, drama, school, friends, and family. All of it has no effect as long as I’m on the court playing the game I love.”

To prepare for the season, they do a lot of running and have scrimmages. “Preparing mentally is one of the hardest parts. Most of the past few seasons have been losing seasons and going into a new one is a fresh start.” They are like each other’s second family. She thinks if they carry that onto the court, they will have a good season.

The team has some incoming freshman. Siara stated, “They know the game and fit in really well with the returning members. We lost Maddie Mancini, who was a four-year starter and will be missed, but I think the team will benefit with Ava [Miller], Lauryn [Speilen], and Madi [Pascia] coming up.”

Overall the team has great players. As long as they keep working together they should have a great season.



Photos Courtesy: Josh Progar and Leia Day



Hallmark Movies: Love em' or Hate em'

BY: LEIA DAY

Many families make it a holiday tradition to sit down as a family, watch holiday movies and get into the spirit. The most well-known, however, are the Hallmark Christmas movies. These romantic holiday movies practically dominate television during the holiday season, but why?

Hallmark movie lover Meghan Parrish says, "They may be cheesy, but they are just feel-good movies." The movies are almost always set in a small town with beautiful mountains and perfect white snow. The small town's streets are usually lined with small shops deco-

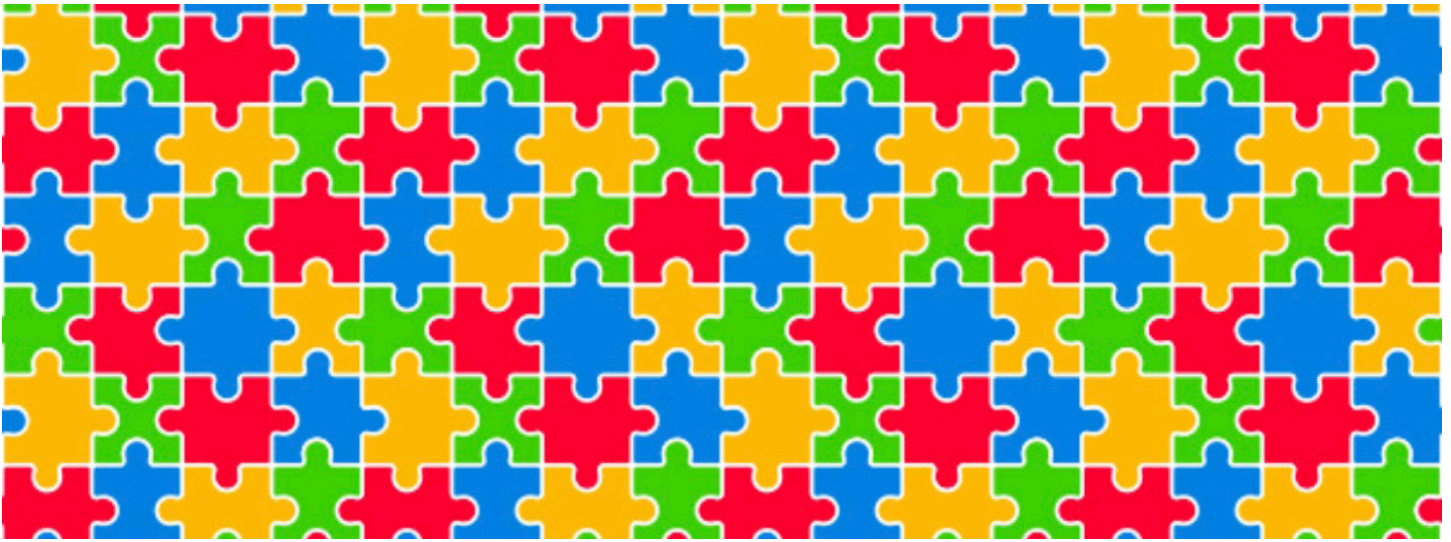
rated perfectly for the season. This is shown in many of the movies. An example of this is the movie *Christmas Under Wraps*. "The movies make you want to move to a small town and cuddle up in bed all day," says Meghan. "They are addicting, you can't stop watching. Once one ends you have to watch the next one."

On the other hand, some people find the movies cheesy, annoying and avoid such traditions. Known for his light-hearted personality, Hopewell High School teacher Mr. Vallecorsa says, "They are overly dramatic and overly acted."

Another reason people may not be fans of these movies is predictability. "All of the movies have the same plot," says Mr. Vallecorsa. Lastly, people may not like the romantic aspect of the movies because they are "unrealistic." Mr. Vallecorsa says that "They are just not realistic, nobody really acts like that."

Whether you love or hate the Hallmark Christmas movies you can't deny they radiate holiday spirit. These movies may not be a holiday tradition for you, but perhaps, with the spirit of Christmas, you could give them a try.





Her Life With Autism

BY: KAIDYN PLOPI

Autism spectrum disorder is a developmental disorder that can impair the ability to communicate and interact. It is very common, with over 200,000 U.S. cases per year. This disorder can affect behavioral, developmental, cognitive, and psychological aspects of the mind and can be treated with therapy and medications.

The following is an attempt to represent the thoughts of Heavynn Smith, a 2 year old who has been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder

My name is Heavynn Lee Smith, I was born on October 12th of 2017. About two months before my second birthday I was diagnosed with level three autism spectrum disorder. I now go to school at Early Head Start.

In school I have breakfast and lunch. This can be a hard time for me. I'm still learning how to control my emotions, so sometimes my food touching can overwhelm me. I also can't always explain what I want to eat, so people struggle to know what to make me. I take naps and play with others while at school. I'm learning how to get along well with others and play nicely. Some days I do not nap; I have so much energy and it can be hard to relax.

I have a long list of "ticks", but mommy and my other family help me get through it. I don't like when my hands are dirty, or when there are tags in my shirts, or loud noises. I have help from my family

and therapists to make sure these ticks don't bother me too much.

My speech therapist has helped me learn many words. I really couldn't say words at all, but now I know so many words and can speak in full sentences. I used to get very frustrated when my family couldn't understand what I said. Now I can tell all of my family what I feel and what I need.

I have had a hard time expressing my emotions. Often times I freak out or throw a fit because I'm unsure as what to do about my emotions. Loud noise can even upset me, it can cause sensory overload. I'm unlike most other kids because of my autism, but the people in my life are always here to help. My family and I would like to spread awareness for autism.





Jojo Rabbit: The Hilarious Hitler Comedy

BY: REGINA HAFNER

Jojo Rabbit is a satire film about World War II. It follows a young German boy named, Jojo as he discovers there is a jewish girl, Elsa, hiding in his basement. This discovery causes conflict within him and his imaginary friend, Adolf Hitler.

At first glance of this movie you may think that it is controversial, especially that the main character's imaginary friend is Hitler out of all people. However, *Jojo Rabbit* is not a neo nazi movie. It's more of a reminder of how ridiculous Hitler's influence was on nazi culuture. Even Hitler in the movie is a hypocrite of himself saying "People have said a lot of nasty things about me 'that guy is a lunatic.'"

Jojo Rabbit isn't just a comedy movie, it also has heart-

warming moments. It shows how overtime Jojo is unsure that him fighting in the war is actually what he wants, therefore forming a friendship with the jewish girl his mom is hiding. The friendship goes so far that he stole colored pencils for her so she wouldn't get bored. And in return she pretended to be his dead sister while the gestapo had an inspection at his house.

One of the best things about *Jojo Rabbit* does is that you don't have to be a history buff to watch it. Nor does the movie shove the idea that it is only a World War II movie. In fact, *Jojo Rabbit* is more of a movie about Jojo being so young and naive towaras his outside world that he has fallen into Hitler always being the leader and the one to follow, which is one



of the main reasons why Hitler is Jojo's imaginary friend. Hitler is like the devil on his shoulder while Elsa is the angel.

Jojo Rabbit is an absolute standout film. Even if you are skeptical about going to see it or watching the trailer, I highly recommend it!





New Year, New Me

BY: LEIA DAY

Will you make a New Year's resolution as the clock strikes midnight, welcoming 2020? Sure, as most people do but, how long will you be able to actually stick to the plan? Whether your New Year's resolution is to get in shape, eat healthier or quit a bad habit you can't argue that resolutions are hard to maintain. According to IFLScience.com, on average most people break their new commitments in under 30 days, but why?

Many people don't actually accomplish their resolutions because they are unrealistic or they set too high of expectations for themselves. Fewer than 10% of the population actually continue their resolution for the entire year. Some

of the most common resolutions are to improve physical health, mental health, or to help people.

Sophomore Lauren Miller says, "I want to bring more positivity into my life, and I actually want to stick to it the whole year." Many people like Lauren are hopeful and excited for a full year full of positivity. Some suggestions to help everyone achieve their goals are to first, do one thing at a time. Set small goals for yourself and continue trying to reach each goal all year.

Another way to increase your chances of accomplishing your New Year's resolution is to have a partner. Sophomore, Hannah Triscila, says, "I want to eat healthier and get better grades." Having a partner can encourage you to continue all year.

In addition, if your resolution is to eat healthier or exercise, a partner can make you feel like you are not alone.

Lastly, something as simple as writing it down can be helpful when trying to accomplish a goal. Ashlynn Ealy says, "I want to make more time to hang out with my friends." A strategy to help make this possible is to utilize a planner or mark dates on a calendar. Planning is a huge help with organization and time management.

2020 is a year with endless possibilities. Start by using some of these tips to not only accomplish your goals but also make this new year one to remember!



December to Remember

BY: MEGHAN PARRISH

Do you ever get around to the holiday season and for some reason you just don't feel very festive? Whether you're a Christmas extremist or you're just trying to get through the cold season, there are various ways to spice up the holiday. If you want to start some new traditions with your family and friends, you came to the right place.

Most people already know the popular traditions to do with family, such as cutting down a Christmas tree and decorating it, making Christmas cookies and leaving them out for Santa, going downtown Pittsburgh to see the tree and ice skate, but there are more that you can start. There are many Christmas light shows that are beautiful and local that you and your family can drive through together. Something most people don't do during the holiday season is Christmas caroling. Yes, it may be somewhat embarrassing at first but what can get you in the holiday spirit more than singing Christmas music? Nothing. "The best way to

spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear," said Buddy the Elf. One last thing you can do with your family is to buy the Elf on the Shelf. My elf on the shelf is named Reginald and seeing him in different places everyday puts a smile on my face.

Not only are there tons of customs to do with your family, but there are plenty of traditions to carry through with your friends. Ever hold a secret santa with your friends? It is exceedingly entertaining to open presents when you don't know who bought it for you. In addition to that, you can have a gingerbread house building contest, which adds some good competition. Lastly, it's always nice to go Christmas shopping with your friends. Having their opinions on what to buy as gifts is always nice as well.

Overall, there are many holiday festivities to perform to brighten the season! Enjoy your Christmas with your friends and family and take a few ideas to apply to your holiday season!



CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD

BY: GIAVONNI KREBS

It's no secret that Christmas is, "The most wonderful time of the year." The caroling, presents, family, and so much more! And who could refuse a nice warm cup of cocoa? But, have you ever wondered how this festivity is celebrated in different countries?

In the US, Christmas is one special day of the year. But in Spain, the holiday itself can last up to 14 days. Not counting the endless celebrating throughout the whole month of December. However, certain days are more important than others. For instance, Christmas Eve, or Nochebuena is a day for family. Extended relatives all join the party by gathering for a huge feast! And after dinner, for the religious side of the family, is Misa del Gallo. This occasion is an extremely memorable midnight mass accompanied by guitars, hand drums, and tambourines. And if you didn't think this night could get any better, the children are visited by a mystical man while sleeping. To us, he is Santa Claus, but to the Spaniards, he Papá Noël, Olentzero, and Tió de Nadal. But Christmas has only begun.

In the Ukraine, Christmas falls on January 7, due to the fact that they use the old 'Julian' calendar for their church festivals. The Ukrainians also have very unique traditions. They eat a special meal on January 6, consisting of 12 different dishes which represent Jesus' 12 disciples. After this meal, families

enjoy joining together to sing carols or 'Koliadky'. These songs can be sung around the table, or they might even go caroling in the streets. And don't fear if you spot a cobweb on a Christmas tree, no spiders here! Believe it or not, it's actually a sign of good luck and prosperity for the new year. The 'Legend of the Christmas Spider' dates back to the late 1800s. A poor hard-working widow had no decorations for her Christmas tree on Christmas Eve. Her and her children went to bed upset but the spiders had other plans. When they awoke the next morning to open the window, rays of sunshine beamed in on the tree and turned the webs

silver and gold. The widow and her children were overjoyed. From then on, they never lived in poverty again. This tradition is also celebrated in Germany, and Poland. A tradition to hold onto.

Ever wondered how Christmas is celebrated down under? Well, it's actually quite different then how you would expect. Instead of bundling up inside by the fire, the Aussies are hitting the beach. Their Christmas falls on the 25 of December, just like ours. Yet, it takes place during their summer break! And it's not as uncommon as you would think to see a family picnicking or swimming on Christmas. Moreover, food plays a huge part in the Australian Christmas. Usually, a cold turkey or ham is prepared along side of several fruits, salads, and deserts. And no Christmas would be complete without Christmas Crackers and a special toy that comes with them. The Australians also have a Boxing Day which is similar to our Black Friday. And at the end of their Christmas celebration, there is usually a display of fireworks at a nearby park. Sounds more like the 4th of July then Christmas.

In the end, Christmas is about spending time with friends and family, enjoying the company of others, and doing the fun traditions that we love so dearly. But, don't wear yourself out just yet, because New Years is right around the corner!



Christmas Memories!

BY: NADIA REYNA

Q: What is your favorite Christmas memory?



Mr Collins:
“The year I got my beagle puppy Tippy. My second favorite was probably when I got my shotgun when I was younger”



Mr. Slapikas :
“When I was 10 years old, I got a Star Wars Lego set. I build it all day and I was the happiest person alive!”



Dr. Dreshman:
When I was 4, I got a Mickey Mouse watch and I still have it to this day. I also love spending time with my family.



Mrs Jamison:
“The year I found out I was pregnant with my youngest after my oldest asked for a baby sister for Christmas.”



Mr Rowe:
“When I was 6 or 7 I got the millennium falcon. But I loved to be surrounded by family when I go to my parents house.”



Mr. Spinenwebber:
When I was 8 or 9 I got my first bike and it was purple. I also remember my sister was mad because she didn't get one. But she got one the year after, so it worked out.



CHRISTMAS COOKIE RECIPES

BY: MADI PASCIA

It's that time of the year again! Christmas is all about friends, family, and food, most importantly dessert! Here are some classic sugar and gingerbread cookies that you can make with your entire family during the Christmas season.

Gingerbread Cookies

You will need:

- 2 cups of flour
- 1 tablespoon of baking soda
- 1 tablespoon of ground ginger
- 1-½ tablespoon of ground cinnamon
- ¾ cup of butter (softened)
- ¾ cup of packed brown sugar
- 1 package (3.4 ounces) JELL-O Butterscotch flavor instant pudding
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon water
- 1 cup of powdered sugar

Make it: Combine first 4 ingredients. Beat all remaining ingredients except for powdered sugar and water in a large, separate bowl with mixer until blended. Slowly add flour to the mixture, tip: mix well. After that refrigerate for 1 hour.

Next, heat your oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Roll dough on a

floured surface and cut into gingerbread shapes (or any shape). Place them a fair amount (2 inches) away from each other on a baking sheet sprayed with cooking spray.

Then, bake for approximately 10-12 minutes or until the edges start to look nice and crisp. Let them cool on the baking sheet for a little, then place on wire racks to cool furthermore.

Finally, use powdered sugar and water to blend as decor for the cookies.

Sugar Cookies

You will need:

- 2 ¾ cups of flour
 - 1 tablespoon of salt
 - 1 tablespoon of cinnamon ground
 - ¼ tablespoon of nutmeg ground
 - 1 cup of butter (softened)
 - 1 egg
 - 2 tablespoons of vanilla extract
- Make it:**

First, preheat the oven to 325 degrees Fahrenheit. Mix flour and salt in a bowl. Then, in a separate bowl, beat the butter and sugar with a mixer until light and fluffy. Add the egg and vanilla into the mix. And

gradually beat the flour into the mixture until well mixed.

Second, roll the dough out onto a floured surface. Cut the dough into the shapes you want and then place on ungreased baking sheet.

Last, bake them for 8-10 minutes or until edges are golden. Cool on baking sheet then transfer onto racks for more cooling. Enjoy!

Courtesy of : myfoodandfamily.com and mccormick.com



