



Childhood memories of the holidays...



**Veronica Zigon,
Shawn's Place chef:**

When she was 15, she was browsing a flea market in her hometown on Long Island and saw a beautiful suede leather jacket. It was floor-length and lined with fur and the most beautiful coat she had ever seen. Unfortunately it was 75 dollars, very much out of the price range of her mother, who was working hard but could not afford the jacket for Veronica. But Veronica mentioned to her sister and her mother how beautiful the coat was and how she wished for it more than anything in the world. On Christmas day, after all the presents were opened, Veronica's mother crept upstairs and brought down one last present for Veronica. It was the coat she had wished for. It's a memory that Veronica thinks of every holiday season. *(Jessie Powell '11)*

**Gerry Meenagh,
school nurse:**

Every Christmas Eve Mr. Meenagh's parents would throw a party for friends and neighbors. Shortly before midnight the guests left so the Meenaghs could be on time for midnight Mass. Mr. Meenagh and his five siblings all

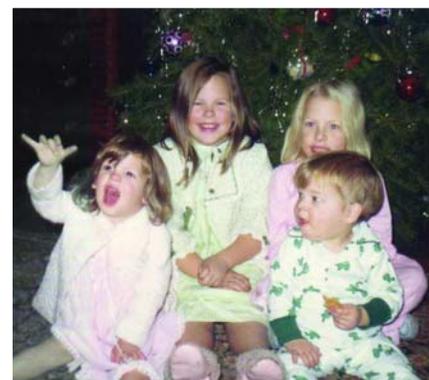


sat in Mass and thought it would go on for an eternity. All they could think about was their presents. When the service finally ended, the Meenagh family would arrive home at one in the morning. Instead of going to bed, they would come alive and open all of the gifts that Santa had left. This was a tradition that occurred every Christmas when Gerry was young. *(Jake Farrell '12)*



**Andrew D'Ambrosio,
Kenefick Learning Center
staff member:**

Mr. D'Ambrosio's birthday is December 17. When he was five years old he and his brother would pick wooden toys out of an advent calendar, alternating days leading up to Christmas. He would always get the 17th because it was his birthday. Since he had a nutcracker collection his mom put the nutcracker in the 17th, but then his brother switched it for a star. Later he found out and got into a fight with his brother and they broke the advent calendar. *(Christian Cordier '11)*



Bill Bullock with sisters Wendy, Martha and Sarah

**Bill Bullock,
History teacher and form dean:**

The snow did not sprinkle and dance on the streets of Maine; to a third-grade boy, it tumbled and dumped itself onto the smooth roads. As the snow and ice mounted, inch by inch, Bill Bullock began to doubt that his father would return home from his business convention in time for Christmas. While most kids stayed up for Santa and Prancer, Bill waited in anticipation for his father. As he drifted off to sleep with his three older sisters—it was tradition for all Bullock children to sleep together on Christmas Eve—his Christmas spirit drifted away with him. Now Billy Bullock was a huge Miami Dolphins fan, and as he slept with anxiety, little did he know that Hall of Fame quarterback Bob Griese had been the speaker at his father's convention. He awoke Christmas morning wide-eyed and saw his father, who had arrived in the middle of the night, and saw that outside, "the ice storm made all the trees glisten." Under the tree was another present, an autographed helmet from Bob Griese himself. *(Viola Clark-El '11)*



Bebe Bullock age 6 (right), with stepsister Alex and stepgrandmother Nini

**Bebe Bullock '87,
English teacher and form dean:**

Mrs. Bullock's family had a special tradition on Christmas Eve: the children were allowed to open one present, pajamas. She now celebrates Christmas with her own family, whose tradition is a fondue dinner every Christmas Eve--chocolate, Japanese fish, and cheese. (*Kim Henry '13*)



Ruthie Fish with brothers Mike and Jeff

**Ruthie Fish,
Student activities director:**

It was always a rise-and-shine morning on Christmas day for Ruth Fish. For her two brothers, their alarm clock was a fist to the arm and "get up" from Ms. Fish. Her parents were downstairs making coffee and finishing wrapping presents while the kids would be taking showers upstairs, not peeking

downstairs. When Ms. Fish and her two brothers were cleaned up, Mr. and Mrs. Fish would "pull out the sweet video camera that held the actual VHS tape," as Ms. Fish describes her outdated camera. Her parents would hold live interviews, asking questions like, "What do you think Santa brought you this year?" Ms. Fish was not too fond of this Christmas tradition. After the "stupid interviews" were completed, the three kids were allowed to go downstairs. Being the competitor Ms. Fish is, she would be the first down the stairs. The Fishes would open their stockings and then it was time to eat breakfast. Yes, they had to leave the premises of the presents to go eat a meal and then come back and open the gifts! Overall, Ms. Fishes' holiday memories are about sharing time with her family and making sure she won every battle between her brothers. (*Kendall Coyne '11*)

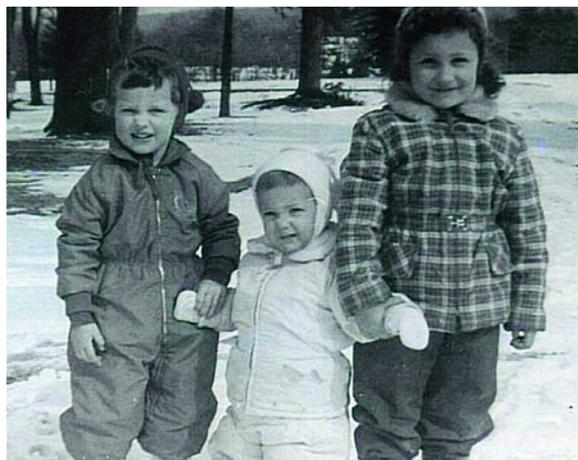
**Judy Ullrich,
Student bank manager:**

Just picture it: you and your three sisters rushing downstairs to the Christmas tree at the bottom. You have to wait till your parents are up and come down, but it's worth the wait. Although it's probable that you and your two sisters are going to get the same thing, who really cares? It's Christmas morning. The dining room ceiling is covered with handmade red

and green paper chains and a tree in the living room that you and your family chopped down yourselves. All that matters now is the frost outside and being in that warm room with your family. Happy Holidays from the Ullrich family! (*Annie Ahrens '11*)

**Nina Rodriguez,
assistant to the director
of admission:**

Ms. Rodriguez's first childhood recollection was when she was seven years at her grandparent's house, Maurice and Jane, in Sisters Lake, Michigan. Huddled tightly in bed with her five-year-old sister, Edie, she patiently awaited Santa Claus' arrival. Her sister was consistently asking, "Did you hear that noise?!" Ms. Rodriguez answered, "I swear I did!" All these holiday seasons later, Ms. Rodriguez recalls this memory as if it were yesterday. (*Charlotte Weil '14*)



Judy Ullrich (middle) with sisters Carolyn and Debbie

My Christmas birthday

By Emily L. Warner, librarian

To me, having a birthday on Christmas Day is like having flowers in Spring; having one without the other would seem strange. When I tell people I have a Christmas birthday, they often ask if I ever feel cheated. The answer is always no. I love having my birthday on such a special day, but I do have to admit that I have, at times, thought about what it might be like to not have a Christmas birthday.

My parents have always tried to make sure we celebrate Christmas and my birthday equally. Christmas is always celebrated in the morning, and my birthday was always celebrated in the afternoon after our Christmas dinner. To many people, having an entire day full of opening presents may seem overwhelming, but it is part of who I am and how Christmas is celebrated in my family. I always thought that it might be somehow better if I didn't have my birthday on such an important holiday, but I have come to realize that it's actually pretty cool to have a birthday on such a special, meaningful day.

I often wonder what it's like to have Christmas and my birthday on two separate days (a June birthday, perhaps?). When I think about it, though, and how nice my Christmas really is, I wouldn't trade it for the world.



Editorial

Do you have the holiday spirit?

By Annie Ahrens '11

I could easily act the cynic and tell you how most people think the holidays are just another Hallmark time of year designed to make cash registers chime. But to tell you the truth, it's the spirit of the season that makes me love this time of year in spite of all the commercialism. For me, it's a fire inside, the snow outside, ornaments twinkling on that big green tree, and memories like Uncle Tom standing up from the dinner table, spiked eggnog in hand, and suddenly starting to sing, "Mele Kalikimaka is the thing to say on a bright Hawaiian Christmas Day."

There's not much that matters more than family and friends. Take a look back on the past year to those times when you wished your parents would come, or when you wanted more than anything else to see and talk to your brother or sister. Or those weird packages you've gotten from your grandparents that still make you smile, long after you've opened them.

So ignore the stupid Target

commercial with the woman in red high heels and red tracksuit. Forget the Black Friday madness and crazy cyber Monday deals and all the after-Christmas sales. (The fact is, even if you do get the new computer you really wanted, the person with the bigger joy is the one who knows how much you love it and appreciates that smile on your face.)

Instead, give the spirit of the season a shot. The Philanthropy Society has set up a toy charity, advisee groups are rounding up money for the homeless, classes are visiting the elderly, and cards are being made for those less fortunate. So give a little something back to your community, whether it's Berkshire or home sweet home.

Curious Smitty

Inquiring photographer Jamie Smith '12

Q: What gift do you want for the holidays?



Caroline Carey '12:

"I want a new winter jacket because my winter coat ripped and it's cold here at Berkshire."



Joe Pezza '13:

"I want an iPod because I need it for the bus for away games and when I work out in the Jack."

Haley Bolton '13:

"I want a trip to Cairo, Egypt, to see the ruins and ancient civilization because I've been learning about Egypt for so long."



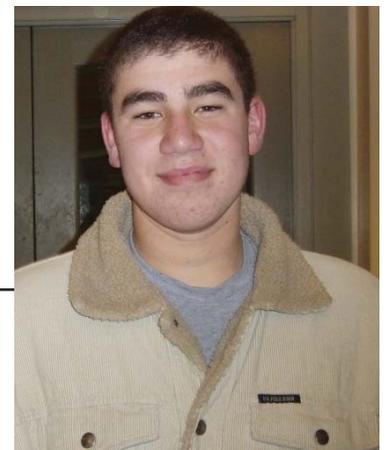
Austin Brandt '14:

"I want to be together with my whole family because we haven't been together for months."



Jesse Hahn '13:

"I want a remote control plane because I think they are a lot of fun to fly. I'm not kidding."



Happy holidays to all, and to all a good break!