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SEASON'S GREETINGS

HANUKKAH

Continued from Page 9B

asked about Christmas he replied, "Santa Claus is not real. He's kind of real, but I don't think so." Notice that Jonathan's ideas about Christmas had to do with Santa Claus and not with anything religious.

Hopefully, when these children enter the Oregon public school system someone will expose them to other religions. I also hope that someone will teach them that the true meaning of Christmas isn't presents and candy canes. Christmas has turned into almost a non-religious holiday. The commercialization has forced the people to view the holidays as merely a time for gift giving and receiving. The children I talked to are proof of this. Not once did I hear anything about religion relating to Christmas.

Every year in grade school my parents taught my schoolmates how to play dreidel games and sing songs that celebrated the joy of Hanukkah. Many of my close friends now tell me that this was one of the most memorable events of their many holiday seasons.

I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to celebrate Hanukkah. Although my immediate family is not very religious, we still feel a bond with the Jewish culture. Every year I hang blue and white decorations; stars, dreidals and Happy Hanukkah banners. My parents tell the story of Hanukkah and stories of our Jewish ancestors. I have my own menorah and I am always in charge of picking out the appropriate candles and lighting them. After igniting them, we sing our customary song ("Oh Hanukkah, oh Hanukkah, come light the menorah. Let's have a party we'll all dance the hora.") We keep up this tradition for the customary eight days.

During high school I was always so busy that as a family we sometimes had problems finding time

to eat together and talk. Sometimes I felt that Taco Bell knew more about my life than my parents. Hanukkah brings us together, and I would never consider missing a single night.

Once a season, we have an enormous family gathering. Relatives travel from the far corners of Los Angeles County to spend time together as a family. This is my favorite part of the holidays.

Each person who attends the party is required to bring a \$5 to \$10 gift. Then all the presents are shoved into the middle of the room and every person is given a number. The person with the number one selects a present and number two can either steal number one's gift or choose one of their own. The game continues until every last person has a present. Not only do we play this game, but we light the menorah and eat lots of yummy Jewish food.

I love this night because it makes me feel very close to the members of my family. I adore seeing everyone in my clan; from Great Aunt Bess, the matriarch of the family; to Adina, the cutest little two year old cousin ever. The family bonds that I feel are so wonderful that I hope that the people who celebrate Christmas have the opportunity to experience the great sense of togetherness with their family that I do.

My wish this year is that people across America will realize that Santa Claus wearing a rented red suit in a shopping mall does not represent the true spirit of the holidays. The holiday season should represent all religions and all cultures.

So please, next time you are in the mall carrying twenty very full shopping bags and you narrowly avoid bumping into the fifty foot decorated tree, think of what you want the holidays to mean to you and to your children.

—Manya Shorr

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MOVIE

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soundtrack is reminiscent of a Broadway musical.

In fact, most of the movie is sung, rather than spoken, thus allowing a 20-minute plot to be stretched into a little more than an hour. But the at-times brooding, at-times spunky music gives the animated characters personality, wit and charm. And best of all, the tunes are catchy enough to warrant repeated humming in public.

Disney has had a recent string of successes with animated musicals. *The Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *Aladdin* owed a large part of their success to their respective soundtracks, and *Night-*

mare, which is released by Touchstone, Disney's adult division, is yet another feather in the company's cap.

Burton, who directed *Batman* and *Edward Scissorhands*, obviously has a penchant for woeful characters who only want to be happy and understood. Unfortunately for Burton, his movies continue to fall short, both in character development and story line. If this guy ever gets the knack for storytelling, look out.

Nightmare, which is rated PG, may not be appropriate for younger children. Many of the characters are really quite creepy and younger children may not comprehend the dark humor of much of the movie. For example, when three little

ghouls discuss their plans to kidnap Santa, they sing, "Kidnap the Sandy Claws/Beat him with a stick/Lock him up for 90 years/See what makes him tick." Along with suggestions of putting Santa in a box and throwing him in the ocean and cutting him up into little bits, a young child may be scared for life and require institutionalization.

In all, *Nightmare* is entertaining and fun, which is about all you can ask from a movie these days. Notwithstanding most people's hesitancy to pay full price for a movie that only lasts about 85 minutes, *Nightmare* ought to be seen in the theater so the full magnitude of the animation and music can be experienced.

—Martin Fisher



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