

# Diwali: Festival of Lights

## Hindu holidays culminate with ancient Indian family festival

**By Komal Patel**  
*Staff Writer*

Fireworks in the sky, lamps in the windows, happiness brightening every face, Diwali is the autumn festival of lights. Diwali is a Hindu holiday that originated in North India, as a celebration for the success of the Lord Rama and his wife, Sita, killing a demon, Ravana by lighting many lamps.

It's not just Diwali, however, that was celebrated this year on November 7. There were many events and functions leading up to this special day.

**Dhanteras** is celebrated on November 9, on the first day of daylight savings. It is celebrated for money, gold, silver, and the prosperity of wealth. On Dhanteras, many Indians buy gold or silver. They do this because Dhanteras is considered a good day to buy gold since the goddess who we worship that day is Laxmi (also known as wealth). It is considered a good luck charm. On this day Hindu people set up a puja and put everything on the table. Then, they sit down with the family and light a lamp, putting the gold coins in some milk to "cleanse" them, so the family will be blessed with happiness, wealth, and, prosperity.

"We do a puja (the religious ritual) to honor the wealth that we have in our houses, and we say thank you to Laxmi," said Vijay Patel, who celebrates this holiday. "For the puja the things we need is a leaf, flowers, rice, kumkum (red powder), some gold or silver coins, some indian sweets, and a picture or statue of Laxmi."

On December 6, **Kali Chaudas** is celebrated, and this is Halloween in India. On this day, Kali Ma (mother of the eternal) killed an asuro (demon). Hindus celebrate this day to end the evil, and to shine light on our lives.

"On this day, me and my mom also make food to bring to the temple," said Dolly Patel. "We offer Laxmi food such as vada, puri, jaggery, ghee, oil, and coconut. I never really knew why we were taking these foods to the temple. When I was younger, I was always told that Kali Chaudas was a time of evil and it was bad. Later when I started getting older, I realized that we would bring food to the temple to offer the food to Laxmi and Hanuman (god of devotion). We'd do this to purify the

food and give it to those in need."

On November 7 is **Diwali**. On this day, everyone dresses up and gets ready for the day by going out and buying fireworks, sparklers, firecrackers, and more. At the end of the day, the family lights many lamps and thanks god for all they have, such as wealth, happiness, money, prosperity, and peace.

"I remember when I was in India, we would get out of school for at least 20 days; yeah it is a huge thing," said Shilpa Patel. "Everyone would go to each other's houses and eat and have a great time. At night, when all the lights were off it was so pretty. Even though, the lights in every house were off, every single house was decorated with light, flowers, lamps, and everything you could ever think off. It was something to remember. There is not one Diwali when I don't miss it all. Living a couple hours from family really makes me sad knowing I can't see them every day of this week

reminds me of india. Diwali is the most beautiful holiday I have ever seen in my life," said Shilpa Patel.

On December 8, **New Year's** is celebrated. It's the time of year to have a fresh start. Hindus celebrate this by having a feast

and going to the temple with family and praying that the coming year will be better than the last, bringing nothing but happiness and prosperity. Celebrants end this night with dancing.

"For New Year's, me and my family go out and literally end up spending so much money on firecrackers, sparklers, and like many loud snappers and stuff," said Neha Patel. "Like, it's crazy how hype everyone gets. It's so funny because every time it's time to do the fireworks and stuff, the cops always show up and get hype with us, unless it's the really cranky cops, but they get used to it. It's like, why should they get mad at us for celebrating our New Year's when they celebrate theirs in the same way and no one said anything you know?"

Finally on December 9, it is **Bhai Beej**, which is a brother and sister day similar to another Indian tradition called Raksha Bandhan. On Raksha Bandhan, a brother gives to a sister. But Bhai Beej is the opposite from this.

Bhai Beej is when the sister calls the brother over for a feast and gives a gift to him. The siblings both

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Photos courtesy Komal Patel

# Off the shoulder could mean out of the yearbook

## Senior portraits giving the cold shoulder to the dress code

**By Grace Poster**  
*Staff Writer*

In response to students' concerns over what girls can wear in their senior yearbook photos, Principal Kathryn Dawe has agreed to meet with yearbook advisor Mrs. Toni Macdonald-Fein to review the school's portrait policy. Together, they have formed a committee of yearbook staff members who will decide which portraits are acceptable.

"We will decide on a case-by-case basis," Dawe said.

The decision comes after at least half a dozen senior girls were recently told their portraits were too inappropriate for the yearbook, just weeks before the turn-in deadline of November 16. This was due to their choice of dress. So far, pictures that have been turned away have included off-the-shoulder tops, jeans, crop tops that expose the midriff, and (in one case) a hat (which was worn by a male).

With a simple Google search of the phrase "school dress code," 464 million articles come up, including ones from established news sources, such as *CNN* and the *New York Times*.

Of the five students interviewed earlier this month by the *Triton Voice*, all agreed that Triton's dress codes are generally lenient and rarely enforced in comparison to other schools nationally, up until these past couple weeks.

"[Dawe] told me that my pictures negatively represented

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# Bathrooms Closed after Destruction of Property

**Maggie Bowen & Kiefer Callewaert**  
*Staff Writers*

Two of the bathrooms at Triton High School have been locked down for the past month due to destruction of property and concerns about vaping.

The police have been involved and have issued summonses to three juveniles for malicious destruction of property, according to the *Newburyport Daily News*. Triton's staff is not sure when the bathroom issues will be fixed, but for now, they will remain closed.

Both female and male students at Triton High School are affected by the bathrooms being regulated. Two out of three boys bathrooms have been closed and locked, including the library and first floor bathrooms. In addition, the doors for the girls bathrooms must now remain open at all times.

"I think it's discouraging that we have to close a bathroom versus teenagers being responsible enough to just use the facilities appropriately," said Theresa Karol, a librarian.

Students must now search the school for an available bathroom to use, and several students said this upset them. "It sucks. It makes it [going to the bathroom] a force," Dylan Souther said.

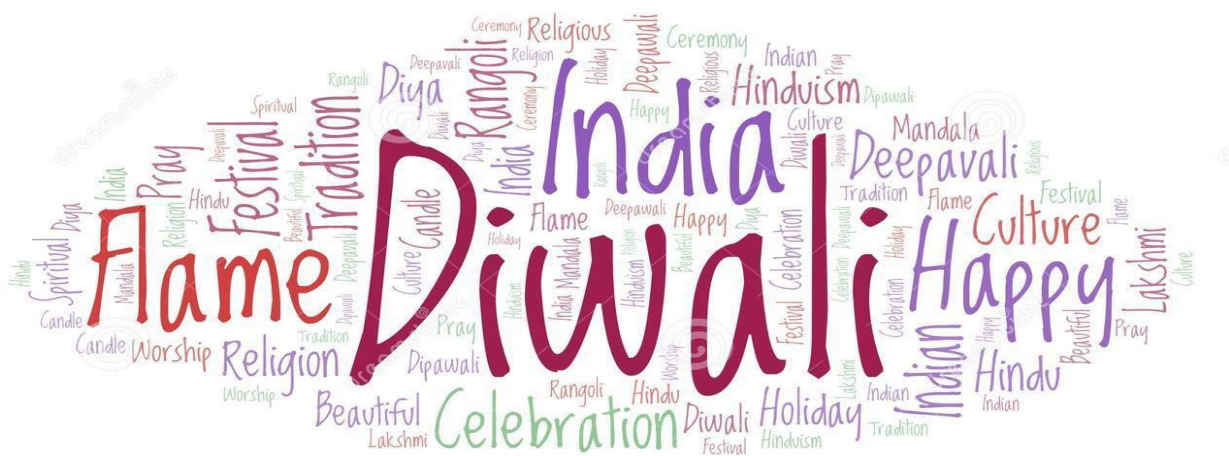
"I think that this shouldn't have happened and we should have new bathrooms anyways because none of the stuff in our bathrooms even works," a student said when speaking about the boys bathroom.

Karol said that shutting down the bathrooms was a necessary first step.

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The sign outside the boys bathroom in the library, which was the target of destruction of property last month (Callewaert photo).





## President's use of Twitter interests some, annoys others

By Sam Bell  
Staff Writer

In his first year as president, Donald Trump tweeted 2,568 times, according to the Trump Twitter Archive. That averages to about seven tweets per day, one about every four hours.

"Presidents have always used whatever type of technological medium is popular," said Chad Richard, a history teacher at Triton.

During his administration, President Donald Trump has released false or contradictory statements, often through Twitter. Of the 629 Trump statements, spoken and tweeted, reviewed by PolitiFact, only 5 percent were "True", 34 percent were "False" and 14 percent were rated "Pants on Fire" (for being blatantly false). Many of the reviewed statement came from Twitter, as Trump has become widely known for his constant use of the social media platform.

"[It was] Roosevelt with the radio, JFK on TV, Obama on YouTube, and now Trump with Twitter," Richard said.

The Trump Twitter Archive shows many trends in his tweets that American citizens have taken notice of. For instance, Trump has made (as of November 16th 2018) 329 tweets about "Fake News", 277 tweets about Russia, 231 tweets about "MAGA" and much more. While some citizens have criticised his use of Twitter, others are more indifferent.

"I don't care if he tweets. It's his right under the First Amendment," said junior Tyler Godfrey. "He's exercising that right."

"I think it's interesting to finally have a president that's more related to the people," senior Eric Desprez

said. "It gives him more of a real person feel, but I do think it gets out of control sometimes."

Some students were more skeptical of both his tweets and their reception.

"Many of his tweets offer inaccurate information," freshmen Kailey Abbot-Bishop said. "A percentage of the population actually just believes his tweets without verifying the information."

"I think that it is super irresponsible," junior Andrew Valienti said. "I don't think it's something the Presidents should be doing. I do appreciate him introducing a new form of communication, but he can say whatever he wants without any accountability."

Trump has been criticized about his statements, both on and off Twitter, because they have been inaccurate or sometimes ideas and theories presented as facts. For instance, some have criticized his many tweets about the Republicans "Big Victory" in the midterm elections. Critics have pointed out that the GOP lost the House and several governorships to Democrats. They have wondered if it is right for him to present that as a victory for the Republicans.

Some of Trump's statements, however, are just false. For instance, in an interview he said that the US is "the only country in the world" with birthright citizenship. In actuality, there are over 30 other countries that offer birthright citizenship.

"It may not look Presidential, but it's his right," Godfrey said.

"The problem [with Trump's tweeting] is that his personality type is so unfiltered and spontaneous," Richard said. "From the executive, it might be a bit too open of a link into his brain."

It is evident there was an effort to inform parents about student dress for senior pictures, however most seniors spoken to all claim they were poorly informed of the dress code, and its regards to this year's yearbook.

"I'm pretty sure my mom doesn't even understand how to use email. She never tells me when she gets them from the school," said Drouin.

Nolan states she believes the regulations on senior portraits in the 2018-2019 yearbook describe underlying communication problems administration has with its own students, claiming "Their justification for this is that we are disrupting others' learning environment, or mis-representing our community, when they are doing the same thing by pulling us out of class and telling us that we're the problem. When in the first place they never established any boundaries which gives them no justification to do what they're doing. So in the end, what is there for administration to gain by telling a girl that her shoulders are exposed? We are not the problem, they are, and their lack to understand their own students and their own policies they implemented."



Senior Leandra Drouin's off-the-shoulder senior photo (courtesy photo).

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shower blessings upon each other. "Every year I look forward to getting money from my brothers because that's what it's all about, right? The money! No I'm just kidding it's not all about the money," said Sanvi Patel. "This is the one day in the whole year that your brothers are supposed to ask you for something. This year, my brother came over my house along with some other relatives and had a great time. We stayed up until like 3 in the morning just talking, catching up, and playing various games."

# A Cup of Cash

Caffeine sipped as bank accounts drain...

By Kelley Frithsen & Mackenna Faucher  
Staff Writers

Waking up early and spending dollar after dollar a week on coffee is no problem for students interviewed at Triton High School who depend on caffeine.

"When I don't drink coffee I get a headache," said sophomore Kyla Prussman.

It is estimated by CBS News that around 73 percent of American teenagers consume caffeine daily. Students interviewed at Triton spend their paychecks on drinks that sometimes don't even satisfy their taste buds for the purpose of staying awake throughout the school day.

"Dunkin Donuts coffee tastes awful. I just get it because it is convenient and I need that extra boost for the day," said senior Lydia Crowley.

Downtown Newburyport, seen as a hotspot for coffee for surrounding towns, has locations such as Starbucks, Plum Island Coffee Roasters and Souffles. Price, quality, location, and even the aesthetic of the coffee cup can determine where Triton students choose to go.

Although high schoolers have near minimum wage budgets, the cost of a cup of coffee can vary from around \$2 to \$4.

"Sometimes if I was having a bad week I'd go about four times," said senior Rylie Carter before she started going less and saving more.

"I spend about \$12 to \$15 a week and like to go to Plum Island Coffee Roasters," said senior Farrah Gabrian, favoring their drinks and location just seven minutes from her house.

Before work, she enjoys grabbing a cup of coffee to get through her shift at Sea Level in Newburyport, right near PICR. This coffee shop is known for its bumper stickers, pink straws, dessert-like flavors, and waterfront view.

Souffles, part of the same company as PICR and Commune, another cafe, with a specialization in crepes, are all located in Downtown Newburyport.

"I like getting Souffles because of the cute straws," said Prussman.

Besides the straw appeal, Souffles has a cozy corner to sit and sip coffee that students gravitate toward during the week-end. With weekly customers, Souffles has created a rewards program that gets stamped each time you buy, eventually leading up to a free cup of coffee.

"Either dunks or Starbucks," said Senior Leandra Drouin.

She only gets coffee once a week, spending around \$2 to \$4. Typically, she will make coffee at home to save time and money.

The highest cost for a local coffee can be found at Starbucks, located in Downtown Newburyport. Known as a high price chain company, their venti drink cost varies from \$3.75 to \$4.90. A current trend seen throughout Triton has been the Mango Dragon Fruit Refresher, a drink from Starbucks. It is unknown whether or not students are drawn to this drink for its taste or purple appearance, but it can be found on a classroom desk any given day of the week.

"I like the taste of dunks better. It tastes the same almost every time. Dunks is the most convenient for me from where I live," said junior Katie Blouin.

The convenience of buying a coffee/drink premade makes the purchase to teens very appealing, even when making it at home can be one fourth of the price.



Junior Samantha Protopapas, enjoys a coffee at Plum Island Coffee Roasters in Newburyport with a friend (Faucher Photo).

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"They weren't doing things that were appropriate, so that was our first step," said Karol. "We're going to open the door to discourage [the girls] from doing anything else other than using the bathroom the way it's meant to be."

Girls in Triton High School have to leave the main bathroom doors open at all times, which has caused some discomfort.

"It makes me very uncomfortable knowing that I could be doing my business in there and the people who sit five feet away, at the computers, can hear me," said junior Sophia Agrella. "From certain angles you can even see into the bathroom from there. It's just a privacy thing, and I like my privacy. I feel like the school isn't ensuring it."