

Nevada

P.O. Box 2907 Sparks, Nevada 89432

N.S.S.S. meets on the 2nd and 4th Saturday of each month at 10:00 am
in the Sparks Heritage Museum at Pyramid and Victorian Avenue
<http://home.earthlink.net/~renostamp/>



N.S.S.S.



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December 6, 2008

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The final month of the year always comes too soon. November has seemed more like Spring than Fall this year and I keep expecting it to start warming up. Whatever your religion, I wish you a Merry Christmas and a golden New Year. And may whatever you celebrate this time of year be a happy occasion

Our next meeting will be held on January 10th, 2009. It is our practice to have the **Christmas party** in lieu of the regular first meeting of the month and skip the second meeting as it would fall during the holidays. The **Christmas party** will be held on the sixth of December at the **Masonic Temple**. The party will begin at 6:00 pm. The address is 601 W. Peckham. Turn west on Peckham off Virginia Street. It's six blocks on the corner. You will find a map on page eight. Have fun at the party.

Dick Dreiling will cook the turkey as he always does and you will bring a side dish, with appropriate spoons knives or forks to serve it. Also remember to bring one present for each person in your party (guests are happily welcomed) to be given to someone. Keep in mind that present may be traded, bartered or otherwise switched with or without the consent of the receivee. Don't despair, it's all in good fun. When all is said, done and eaten, don't forget to take your bowls, plates, silverware and other apparatus you may have brought. Dick's collection

of spoons gets bigger every year.

PENPEX will be held Dec 6 & 7 at 1400 Roosevelt Ave in Redwood City, CA. Times are 10 to 5:30 and 10 to 4.

<http://www.penpex.org/>

ARIPEX will be held on January 23-25 in Tucson Arizona at the Tucson convention Center, 260 S. Church St. See their site for an exhibitor prospectus;

<http://www.aripexonline.com/>

Filatelic Fiesta will be held on Jan 30, 31 and Feb 1, 2009. 10 to 6:00 and 10 to 4 at the Santa Clara County Fair Grounds.

<http://www.filatelicfiesta.org/>

Merry Christmas



The picture was painted by **Hieronymus Bosch** in 1516. It is from a triptych called "The Adoration of the Magi".

Santa Claus

Most children know Santa Claus as a big, round, red-cheeked, joyous, old gentleman who delivers Christmas gifts clad in black boots and a red and white suit. But really, who is Santa Claus and where does Santa Claus come from?

The legend of Santa Claus dates all the way back to the 4th century when a child named Nicholas was born. At that time, nobody knew that he was to become world renowned as Santa Claus, but Nicholas soon showed signs of special abilities.

As a grown-up he became bishop of Myra in Lycia, a province of the Byzantine Anatolia, now in Turkey, where, according to legend, he only did good deeds.

One of the deeds later associated with Nicholas as Santa Claus or gift donor took place when he saved a family from poverty one night by throwing money through their window. But Nicholas was capable of much more than that. He could, by the power of God, bring the dead back to life and save sailors from storms. Therefore, Nicholas (later known as Santa Claus) was beatified and initially, was mostly honored by the sailors.



At first, Nicholas became a Catholic saint, but during the Reformation hagiolatry was abandoned by the Protestants. However, it was difficult to just drop St. Nicholas due to his popularity; thus, he was portrayed without a bishop's miter and was named Santa Claus. Coincidentally, Nicholas had died in December, thus, it was now easy to associate him as Santa Claus with Christmas and gift-giving.

That's how St. Nicholas became known under the name Santa Claus in Europe and later on, also in the USA. His story was spread by the Dutch sailors berthing in New York. They called St. Nicholas "Sinterklaas", and through translations to American English, he became the American "Santa Claus".

Nice story, huh? And it might be true. This one came from the internet from a site called "All Things Christmas" . Its a good site with a lot to offer. There are games for kids and pictures to color (online), decorating ideas and recipes. There are also blogs and a few articles ("Tinsel - Love it or Hate it?"), even Christmas music while you're exploring the site.

<http://www.allthingschristmas.com/>

Was Jesus really born on December 25th?

At Christmastime, you might notice signs amid residential light displays or on church boards that merrily proclaim "Happy Birthday, Jesus" or announce that "Jesus is the reason for the season." Of course, such messages are merely meant to remind people of the sentiment behind Christmas. But the signs do raise questions about the accuracy of Biblical dates and the history of the Church year.



Because the Bible offers no date for Jesus' birth, the placement of the nativity is up for debate. However, the presence of shepherds "keeping watch over their flock by night" [Luke, 2:8] suggests the birth may have actually occurred in the spring during lambing--the only time of year shepherds watched their flocks both day and night. During the centuries immediately following Jesus' life, Church leaders made no effort to correctly date the nativity. They focused on deaths and feast days, dismissing births as secondary.

But by the early fourth century, Church leaders decided they needed a Christian alternative to rival popular solstice celebrations. They chose December 25th as the date of Christ's birth and held the first recorded Feast of the Nativity in Rome in A.D. 336. Whether they did so intentionally or not, Church leaders directly challenged a fellow up-start religion by placing the nativity on December 25th. The Cult of Mithras celebrated the birth of their infant god of light on the very same day.

Church leaders may have also had theological reasons for choosing the date of Dec. 25th. The Christian historian Sextus Julius Africanus had identified the 25th as Christ's nativity more than a hundred years earlier. Chronographers reckoned that the world was created on the spring equinox and four days later, on March 25th, light was created. Since the existence of Jesus signaled a beginning of a new era, or new creation, the Biblical chronographers assumed Jesus' conception would have also fallen on March 25th placing his birth in December, nine months later.

This story was brought to us from the website <http://christmas.howstuffworks.com>

<http://allrecipes.com/Recipes/Holidays-and-Events/Christmas/Main.aspx>

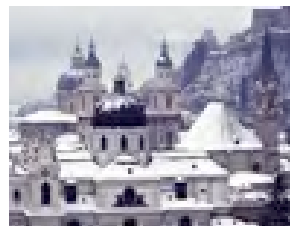
With the season fast approaching many foods must be baked, poached, boiled, broiled or otherwise prepared for guests whether they are invited or just dropped by. Here's a great site to learn new recipes like pumpkin turnovers, hot spiced cider or holiday cookies!



How about the history of Christmas from the Catholic point of view? This site has some interesting tales to tell. The picture is from one of their Christmas cards.

<http://www.history.com/minisites/christmas/>

Then there is the history of Christmas without the religious bias. Here you will learn the "Real Story of Christmas." When you're all through reading about the origins of Christmas, you can order a trip for two and spend a romantic Christmas in Salzburg.



<http://www.howstuffworks.com/christmas.htm>



This one is from the people who bring us "How Things Work", a really neat site. But, in this case, the site focus' on Christmas. Here's one question they try to answer for you. Was Jesus really born on December 25th? I could tell you but you'll just have to read it for yourself.!

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/christmas/>



Let's not forget about the kids, after all. it is their season. This site is for the younger ones (maybe up to eight years) who would like to make their own Christmas cards, ornaments or decorations. There are short books to print out, puzzles to solve and pages to color. And when you're done with all this more holidays can be filled with fun from the links at the bottom.

Enchanted Learning has over 20,000 pages.



If you are new to the club and haven't yet tried the quiz, I suggest that you start here. You have seen the Auction Bucks auction and one way to secure some of the goodies is to earn Auction Bucks. You can acquire 1200 plus right here over the year starting with 110 this month. Read it before you move on, then take the quiz!

1. Which of the following is NOT one of Santa's reindeer?
A) Sleepy B) Doc C) Dopy
2. Who tries to stop Christmas from coming by stealing all things Christmas from the Who's?
A) Jim Carrey B) The Grinch C) Ron Howard
3. Similar to tinsel, these long strips of shiny foil are used to decorate at Christmas
A) Icicles B) Foil C) Long, shiny things
4. Which of the following is often given as Santa's birth name?
A) Kris Kringle B) Nicholas C) S. Claus
5. What kind of Christmas is Bing Crosby dreaming of in his famous song?
A) White B) Where the treetops glisten C) Just like the one I used to know
6. What is the name given to things built in the front yard after it snows all over the place?
A) Snowmen B) snow women C) Snow forts
7. Jingle Bells is a song heard most often during what season?
A) Christmas B) Kwanzaa C) "Winter Holidays"
8. Which song is heard during the "Winter Holidays"?
A) Santa Baby B) Sleigh Bells C) Let it Snow
9. Which song is heard during the "Winter Holidays"?
A) Silent Night B) Little Drummer Boy C) I'll be home for Christmas
10. Which song is heard during the "Winter Holidays"?
A) Star of Wonder B) Blue Christmas C) Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas

Bonus question: Was Jesus born on December 25th?

For those of you who are new and decided to start earning bucks with this quiz, I'm sure you did well. The Christmas quizz is usually the easiest of the year (Merry Christmas). The rest of the year, this quiz may give you pause for some thought so ask yourself this, "Are you smarter than a Fifth Grader?"

Well, it's the merry merry month of January and time to reveal the answers to last month's quiz. Seems I put all correct answers in the choices so, if you answered the questioned, you got it right. I'll try to do better next time, so have your thinking cap on for the January quiz.

1. A, B, C. Well, gosh, Sleepy, Doc and Dopy are all characters from Sleeping Beauty so I guess you got this one right.

2. A, B, C. Hmmmmmm, Jim Carrey played the Grinch which was directed by Ron Howard. They're all guilty!!

3. A, B, C. Icicles are shiny long things made from tinfoil.

4. A, B, C. Kris Kringle, Nicholas and S. Claus, these are all the same people, aren't they? Somebody? Aren't they?

5. A, B, C. Ahhh, Bing Crosby, the crooner, sang about a White Christmas, just like the one I used to know. Where tree tops glisten and children... Well, the words are on page three. Take a look for yourself!

6. A, B, C. Don't know about you but when I was a kid I loved to build snow forts and would staff them with snowmen. When I got a little older, I started building snow women! Heh, heh, I still enjoy that.

7. A, B, C. I think "Winter Holidays" kind of covers all of the answers but I still prefer Christmas. Kwanzaa will do it too.

8. A, B, C. Ertha Kitt did "Santa Baby" in her own inimitable style while the "Sleigh Bells" went jing, jing jing-a-ling and "Let it Snow" was repeated three times.

9. A, B, C. "The Little Drummer Boy" went a-rump a-pum pum on an otherwise "Silent Night" and "I'll be Home for Christmas" was a great song during WWII!

10. A, B, C. If I recall correctly, Elvis had a "Blue Christmas" (hope the rest of us won't) while he saw the "Star of Wonder", star of light. "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" has always been a favorite of mine

Bonus question. This one is a "yes" or "no" question and it can be answered either or both ways. The truth is, no one really knows.

Darn, I did it again, didn't I? This is supposed to be in next month's issue, this isn't January, so pretend you didn't read it. Darn.

Christmas in Austria

The feast of St Nicholas marks the beginning of Christmas in Austria. The saint accompanied by the devil asks children for a list of their good and bad deeds. Good children are given sweets, toys and nuts. Gifts that are placed under the tree are opened after dinner on Christmas Eve.

Brass instruments play chorale music from church steeples, and carol singers, carrying blazing torches and a manger from house to house, gather on the church steps.

Silent Night was first sung in 1818, in the village church of Oberndorf. There is a story told of how Christmas was almost spoiled for the villagers that year.

On Christmas Eve, the priest went into the church and found that the organ was not working. The leather bellows that are used to pump the air through the pipes were full of holes. Christmas without music would not do so the priest showed the organist Franz Bauer a new Christmas hymn he had written. Franz quickly composed a tune for it that could be played on a guitar. So Oberndorf had music after all.

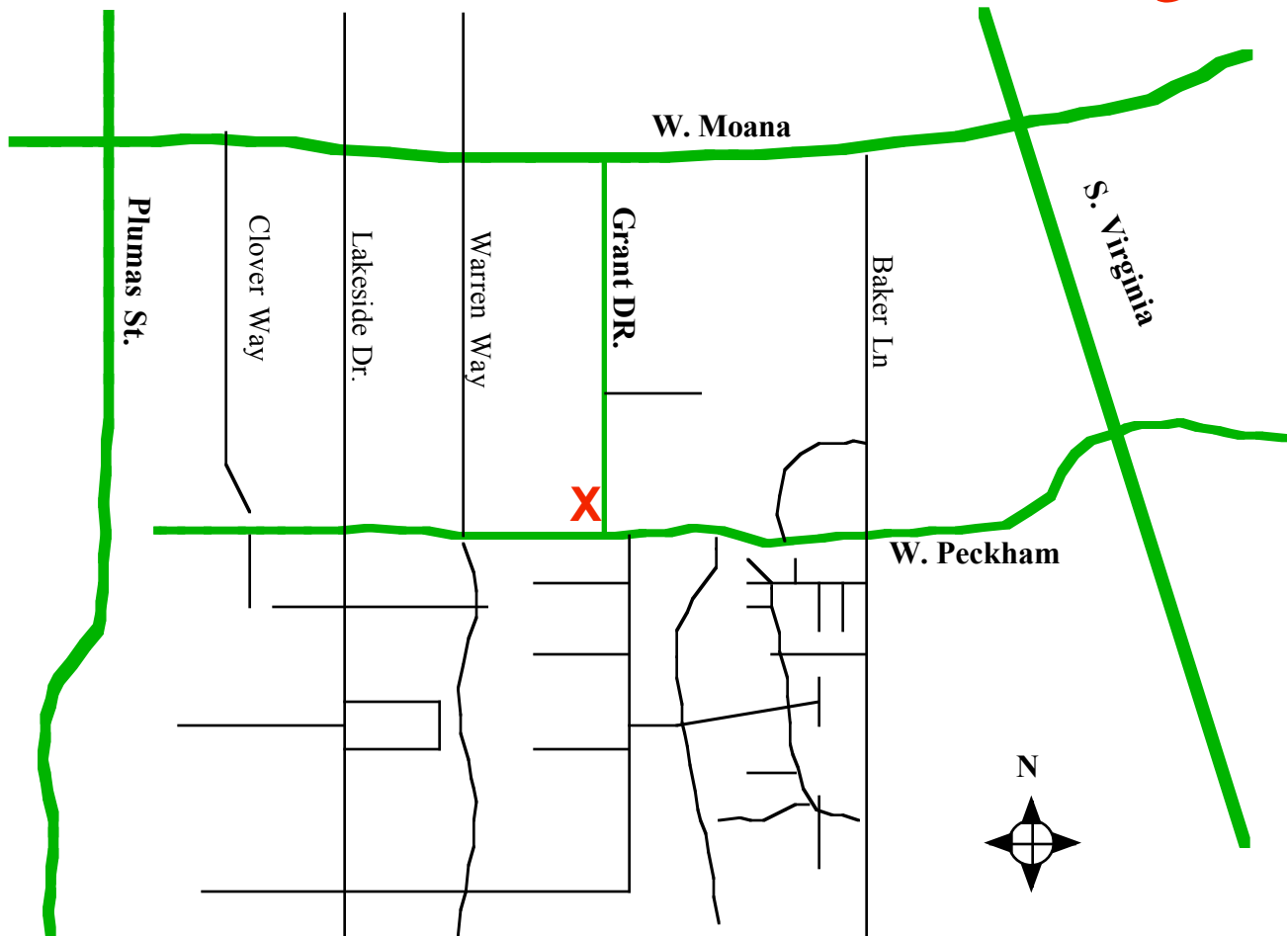
In Austria baked carp is served for the traditional Christmas dinner.

December 6 in Austria is when Heiliger Nikolaus or St. Nicholas, rewards good children with sweets, nuts and apples.

On December 24, the Christ Child brings presents and the Christmas tree for the children. The children wait until they hear a bell tinkling. Then they enter a special room where the Christmas tree is waiting all decorated with candles, ornaments and candies. The whole family sings Christmas carols and wishes each other:

FROLICHE WEIHNACHTEN!

Lets To the Christmas Party



While this map isn't perfect it is pretty accurate as far as where the streets end. For instance, Clover Way comes up short of Peckham and Peckham doesn't go all the way to Plumas. North is the top of the map and south is the bottom.

The easiest route is Virginia to Peckham to Grant, park the car and have a good time at the party. You can also take Grant, Lakeside or Warren from Moana but not Clover. Baker also reaches all the way to Peckham. If you're on Plumas, go to Moana then Grant and turn right. The party is where the big red X is. Don't get lost in the streets south of Peckham.

Have fun at the party and drive safely.