

# THEN & NOW



BY MIDGE NEFF-LECLAIR, PHD, HISTORY

## Holiday Customs

Have you ever wondered where your Christmas customs and winter traditions originated? When they began, and how have they changed over the

years? What other events are also commemorated, celebrated or remembered? Did you know that on December 1st, 1913, Henry Ford introduced the assembly line to expedite automobile manufacturing, making some available for Christmas that year? The first nuclear chain reaction occurred on December 2nd, 1942 after years of research. The first human heart transplant operation was December 3rd, 1967. Many countries around the world celebrate St. Nicholas Day on December 6th with gifts of candy and toys, continuing the memory of the gifts brought by the three Wise Men to the Christ Child. December 7th, 1941

will always be remembered for the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Not many know that the first U.S. Savings Bank was opened on December 13th, 1816, and Basketball was invented on the 15th of December, 1891. Historians say the Boston Tea Party was staged December 16th, 1773. The Wright Brothers made aviation history with their flight on December 17, 1903, and car drivers everywhere rejoiced when the inflatable tire was patented December 20, 1892.

Chanukah is celebrated in memory of the miracle of the lamp oil burning (this is written in the Old Testament). Christmas

finally arrives on the 25th, Kawanzaa begins on the 26th, and fans around the world have enjoyed popcorn and sweet treats since the first Movie theater opened on December 28, 1895, all of us who listen are happy the radio patent was filed December 29th, 1891.

The holiday season blends customs and traditions from around the world. The shopping season was extended a week to benefit retailers near the end of the Great Depression by President Roosevelt, who changed Thanksgiving to an earlier date. Starting earlier and earlier every year, stores now show the merchandise before

Halloween.

Christmas Cards have been exchanged (some date back to the first printed ones from 1843). Charles Goodall & Sons of London began printing and selling large numbers of cards in 1862. Louis Prang, a Boston Lithographer, began printing multicolored Christmas cards in 1865, but sold them in Europe. He began selling them in the U.S. in 1875, and now they are sold here and around the world.

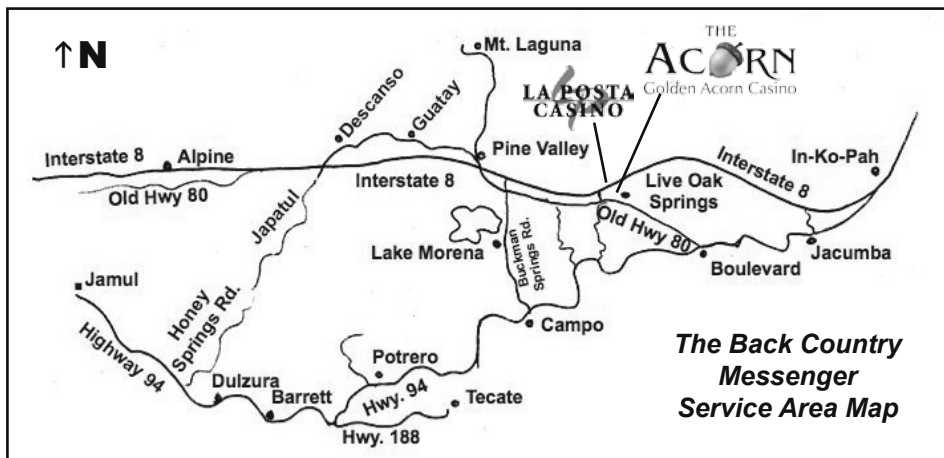
For those of us who enjoy a "log on the fire," can thank the Norsemen and Anglo-Saxons for the tradition of the Yule log. They used

to burn a huge oak log once a year to honor Thor, God of Thunder. After the Norse became Christians they made the Yule log an important part of their Christmas ceremonies. The custom spread through Scandinavia, Lithuania, England and on to America. It is believed that the Christmas tree also came from Scandinavia, and was shown to St. Boniface in a vision. Legend has it that about 1240 years ago he was traveling through Germany and was able to prevent a human sacrifice, chopped down the oak tree, and saw a small evergreen tree, and told them the fir

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## A Back Country Guide

To help you find your way around the back country



**ALPINE:** Motels, fast foods, restaurants, shops, health care, gas&lodging, historical significance, Viejas Casino and Factory Outlet Center, Post Office, churches, library, sheriff, fire protection, and community center.

**DESCANSO:** The Descanso Junction Restaurant, the Trading Post, Perkins Store & center, Camp Oliver, Historical sites, Post Office, churches, CDF, schools, and library along with a community center.

**PINE VALLEY:** Gas, restaurants, grocery, dental, lodging, County Park, camping & hiking, horseback riding, Historical sites, ORV area and U.S. Border Patrol facility, churches, library, Post Office and community center.

**CAMPO:** The Railroad Museum, Motor Transport Museum, Stone Store Museum, fishing and camping at Lake Morena, gas, groceries, Lake Morena RV park, the Malt Shop and El Rancho Bar and Grill.

In Campo the Campo Diner, Circle K, Trading Post, Mountain Health Center, Pacific Crest Hiking Trail, U.S. Border Patrol, ORV sites in Corral Canyon and along the U.S./ Mexican border, churches and a library, CDF and Campo Fire, Post Office and community center. In addition, the Golden Acorn Casino.

**POTRERO:** The Potrero Store, Café 94, Post Office, CDF, County Park, library, schools, a Christmas tree farm, hiking, camping and a community center.

**TECATE:** The gateway to old Mexico; a passport is required to enter the United States through the International border.

**BARRETT:** Home of camping, fishing, and the best all you can eat fish fry at Barrett Junction Café.

**BOULEVARD:** The La Posta Casino and restaurant, Live Oak Springs Resort, camping, cabins, gas, liquor & deli, markets, library,

community center, hotels, Coins and Collectables and the world famous Wisteria Candy Cottage, U.S. Border Patrol, fire and sheriff depts. The "Sacred Rocks Reserve" is a live-in park that offers overnight camping and motor home traveler's spaces with full hook ups. Restrooms, showers, swimming pool, and many large oak trees and hiking trails are located within the reserve.

**JACUMBA:** The Hot Springs Resort and Spa, laundromat, market, Mountain Health Center, library, community center, park, glider port, and churches in town. Off the interstate is the De Anza Resort, a Subway and two gas stations.

**IN-KO-PAH:** Home to an equipment sales center and the Desert View Tower. The tower is a roadside attraction with gifts, shade, drinks, restrooms and a view for many miles.

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