



SAN JOSE STAMP CLUB NEWSLETTER



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2008 Club Officers

President

James Sauer 408.445.2694
hjamessauer@yahoo.com

Vice President

WE STILL NEED ONE.

Secretary

David Gilman 408.264.1953
janddgilman@earthlink.net

Treasurer

Richard Clever 408.238.0893
asiaphil@concentric.net

Newsletter Editor

James Sauer 408.445.2694
hjamessauer@yahoo.com

Filatelice Fiesta

General Chairman

Steve Schumann 510.785.4794
sdsch@earthlink.net

Exhibits Chairman

Dr. Edward Laveroni 408.356.7561

Bourse Chairman

Wayne Menuz 408.265.5539

Jury Coordinator

Steve Schumann 510.785.4794
sdsch@earthlink.net

Visit our website at:

filatelicefiesta.org

Northern California Trivia

- Q. A large influx of Irish settlers gave what nickname to San Ramon?
- A. "Limerick"
- Q. What nickname does Lombard Street in San Francisco have?
- A. "Crookedest street in the World."

From *Northern California Trivia*
by Ernie & Jill Couch

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Merry Christmas

Pot-Luck Dinner

The holidays are upon us and, as is our custom, so is the holiday pot-luck dinner. We will once again hold it in conjunction with the San Jose Post Card Club. It will take place December 3rd which is the first Wednesday of the month and is the SJSC regular meeting date. The two clubs will also share in the cost of a ham so that no one has to pay the cost by themselves. And once again Mary Ann Stanfield of the SJPC will coordinate the dishes needed. Call Mary Ann to find out what is needed prior to preparing something that may already be assigned. Mary Ann can be reached at 408.747.1653.

Steve Schumann will bring about a dozen prizes and every attendee will receive a ticket for the drawings.

Last years event was great fun with good attendance. It's our hope that those that didn't attend last year will be there this year.

This a terrific opportunity to meet the new club members and also the members of the post card club.

And please, do remember that your significant other is invited. This is, after all, a family affair.

Jim Sauer will be collecting monies for those wishing to subscribe and/or extend their subscription to Linn's. The more subscribers we get the lower the cost for each participant. The first subscription is at full price and all the rest are half price. We average them to determine the cost for each. It'll be about \$25 each.

- 12-7 Pearl Harbor Day
- 12-21 Hanukkah begins at sundown
- 12-21 Winter Solstice
- 12-25 Christmas Day
- 12-26 Boxing Day (Canada)
- 12-26 Kwanza begins

Filatelice Fiesta

Steve Schumann has accepted the position of Filatelice Fiesta general chairman for which I am very grateful. As I've stated in the past I need to reduce my duties for the club. I'll continue as president and newsletter editor for the time being as I would very much like to see the club become more active and grow the membership. By the way, we still need a vice president!

Steve may be reached by phone at 510.785.4794 or you may e-mail him at sdsch@earthlink.net.

Tom Siddens was welcomed as the newest member of the Filatelice Fiesta committee. We have not yet assigned a specific duty to Tom but will find duties for him soon. Thanks Tom, your commitment to help is very much appreciated.

Jacques Refregier

Jacques recent eye procedure has been a complete success and we are pleased to see his return to the club meetings. He was his old self at the November meetings.

His only lament is the number of Vets left that survived the December 7, 1941 Japanese sneak attack on Pearl Harbor. Seems they have held annual conventions for some time now and there are fewer every year in attendance. That's because we're old, Jacques—fewer WWII, Korea and even Viet-Nam vets are still around and it gets worse every year. I believe that's called attrition.

DUES

The bad news is dues are due but the good news is they are now only \$12 adult and \$6 for youths. Please pay them now so Richard can get this chore off his "TO DO" list. Thank you.

pot-pourrie

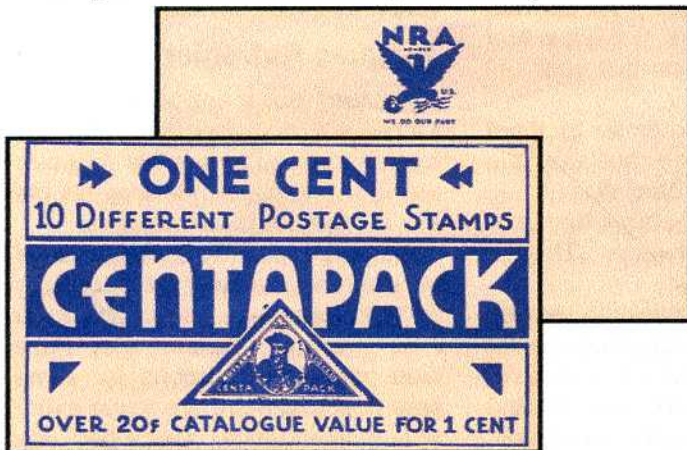
More JFK Bologna

Regarding John F. Kennedy's Inaugural Address: If one were to poll Americans, and perhaps even people from other countries, and asked for a quote made by John F. Kennedy, likely most would cite "Ask not what your country can do for you — Ask what you can do for your country." JFK was not the originator of this quote.

The original author was Khalil Gibran who was born in Lebanon, but immigrated to America in 1891 when he was only 8 years old. Gibran gave a speech to the people of Syria and Lebanon in the early 1900s and "Ask not what your country can do for you - Ask what you can do for your country" was in his speech. He went on to write numerous essays and poems. His works were originally written in Arabic and were translated into over one-hundred languages. Many of his works became highly influential in the American popular culture in the 1960s.

Depression Era Packet

Ten different stamps for 1¢—such a deal! As there is a logo of the National Recovery Act of June 16, 1933 on the back of this small packet (4.25 X 2.5 inches) we know it's from the depression and very likely early on. It equates to ten stamps for \$2 today, using the Scott Catalogue minimum value of 20¢ each today.



One has to wonder if values such as this will return in light of the condition of today's stock and real estate markets—everything is losing value including many modest stamps. Even a penny for ten stamps was very likely a stretch for many people—remember, you could actually purchase things for a penny 75 years ago!

Today there's nothing to be bought for a penny, and some people actually throw them away! I have to wonder if in another 75 years people will throw dollar bills away? Don't laugh—I can remember telling home buyers that the day would come when the money they were spending on a house wouldn't buy a decent new car and we all know how that came out!

Constantino Brumidi Who?

I doubt there is anyone on Earth that hasn't heard of Michelangelo and his fresco painting on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. (Fresco is the art of adding color to plaster and using the colored plaster to "paint" a picture.) In America there was another artist highly skilled in the art of doing frescoes but for the most part his name remains unknown by almost everyone. He did his fresco in 1865. However, his work, to this day is viewed by literally millions every year. The work is The Apotheosis of Washington and is on the ceiling of the Capitol rotunda in Washington, DC.

Constantino Brumidi was a native of Italy. He fled Rome in the early 1850's when he was in his fifties to escape political persecution. He immigrated to America. Several year later while touring the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. he noted how blank and dull the ceiling of the Capitol Building was. Being a masterful artist in Italy with a good reputation, he lobbied the American government to commission him to "paint" a fresco on the ceiling of this building. After submitting sketches of his concept to fill the ceiling he was commissioned to do the work.



Scaffolds were erected that were 180 feet high. Brumidi lay on his back to mix the plaster with colors and apply it to the ceiling. His face was just inches away from the ceiling. He often worked day and night since the art of fresco painting is so demanding; Chemical changes in the plaster add beauty and permanence to the work but also require the artist to work for extended periods with a break. Those areas not completed before the plaster dries must be scraped off and redone.

For eleven months Brumidi labored on the work even though his shoulders and arms ached. When his completed work was unveiled to the public it was met with tremendous enthusiasm. Despite receiving many offers for him to do frescos for other people, he turned them all down. He told everyone that his main goal was to continue doing additional frescos within the Capitol Building if the government would commission him to do so. They did! His next project was to create a fresco upon the blank eight foot section surrounding the dome that circled the rotunda. He envisioned a series of vignettes depicting scenes from American history. He completed six of the vignettes before he died in 1877.

From historybuff.com

The Man Who Created Santa As We Know Him Today

From the internet.

Although he could not read or write, Thomas Nast is a perfect example of the importance of knowing our heritage and just how many legacies one person can leave behind. Thomas Nast, through his wood engravings, helped to shape customs not only in America but also throughout the world.

Thomas Nast is best known for his Christmas drawings. His first drawing appeared in Harper's Weekly for Christmas of 1862, marking the first appearance of *Santa Claus as we know him today*. Prior to this, Santa had passed through a series of stages beginning with a more religious-type figure.



The inspiration for how Nast's Santa should look came from Clement Moore's poem 'Twas the Night Before Christmas. Still lacking reading skills, he had his wife read to him while he prepared his drawings and engravings. On one occasion, Mrs. Nast read Clement Moore's poem to Thomas. That's all it took for inspiration.

The next 24 years saw Nast produce 76 Christmas engravings that were signed and published. Nast used Moore's poem to put it all together in visual form—a sleigh, reindeer, jolly old elf, filling the stockings hung by the chimney, and so forth.

In addition, Nast used his own imagination to expand upon the theme. He was the first to establish that Santa's home was in the North Pole. In this way, Santa didn't belong to any one country—he became a citizen of the world. The concept of Santa having a workshop and elves to help him was also Nast's idea. Prior to his engravings, all children received gifts from Santa. Nast conceived the idea that bad children didn't get gifts from Santa. The custom of sending Santa a letter is also due to Thomas Nast. Although the custom of kissing under mistletoe was known in Europe prior to Nast's engravings, it was through his engravings in America that the custom caught on there.

Thomas Nast brought Christmas to a large audience through his engravings. The result of the impact that these drawings had on Americans is astronomical. In Europe, Christmas was observed for centuries on December 6. By the late 1800's when Nast's Santa Claus gained popularity, Christmas Day was legally established as December 25 in all states and territories in the United States. In addition, an extended school vacation during this period became a custom. (A brief pause while all students write a thank you note to the Nast estate.)

From this seed, Christmas began the move to commercial and economic interests. Stores began including drawings of Santa (though not necessarily done by Nast) in their ads and tying it in with Christmas sales and promotions. Soon to follow was the custom of sending Christmas cards. Without Thomas Nast and the Christmas drawings that he brought to the masses, it is hard to tell what Christmas and the customs that go with it would be like today. ■



Thomas Nast and one of his renditions of Santa Claus as he saw him.

Christmas Holidays

Winter Solstice/Yule is the longest night of the year. It is a Pagan holiday, when the return of the sun is celebrated, as the days are about to get longer. At this time, there is a battle between the Holly King & Oak King, in which the Oak, representing lighter times, will win.

Also in the Celtic/Druidic calendar, this would be the Nameless Day. This is the day in between the old year and the new year in the Druidic tree calendar and is represented by mistletoe.

Many common Christmas symbols actually came from the Winter Solstice when the Christians were trying to convert the Pagans in the Middle Ages. (Evergreen tree, mistletoe, Yule logs, etc.)

The Winter Solstice is December 21, 2008 and is also the first day of Hanukkah (at sundown). ■

In my many years I have come to a conclusion that one useless man is a shame, two is a law firm, and three or more is a congress.

— John Adams (1735-1826)

'The most terrifying words in the English language are: I'm from the government and I'm here to help.'

— Ronald Reagan

Hanukkah

Hanukkah (Hebrew: חנוכה alt. **Chanukah**), also known as the **Festival of Lights**, is an eight-day Jewish holiday commemorating the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem at the time of the Maccabean Revolt of the 2nd century BCE. Hanukkah is observed for eight nights, starting on the 25th day of Kislev according to the Hebrew calendar, and may occur from late November to late December on the Gregorian calendar.

The festival is observed by the kindling of the lights of a special candelabrum, the Menorah or *Hanukiah*, one light on each night of the holiday, progressing to eight on the final night. An extra light called a shamash, (Hebrew: "guard" or "servant") is also lit each night, and is given a distinct location, usually higher or lower than the others. The purpose of the extra light is to adhere to the prohibition, specified in the Talmud (Tractate Shabbat 21b-23a), against using the Hanukkah lights for anything other than publicizing and meditating on the Hanukkah story. (The shamash is used to light the other lights.)

Hanukkah is mentioned in the deuterocanonical or apocrypha books of 1 Maccabees and 2 Maccabees. 1 Maccabees states: "For eight days they celebrated the rededication of the altar. Then Judah and his brothers and the entire congregation of Israel decreed that the days of the rededication...should be observed...every year...for eight days. (1 Mac.4:56-59)" According to 2 Maccabees, "the Jews celebrated joyfully for eight days as on the feast of Booths."

"Hanukkah," from the Hebrew word for "dedication" or "consecration", marks the re-dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem after its desecration by the forces of Antiochus IV and commemorates the "miracle of the container of oil." According to the Talmud, at the re-dedication following the victory of the Maccabees over the Seleucid Empire, there was only enough consecrated olive oil to fuel the eternal flame in the Temple for one day. Miraculously, the oil burned for eight days, which was the length of time it took to press, prepare and consecrate fresh olive oil.

Hanukkah is also mentioned in the deuterocanonical books of 1 Maccabees and 2 Maccabees. 1 Maccabees states: "For eight days they celebrated the rededication of the altar. Then Judah and his brothers and the entire congregation of Israel decreed that the days of the rededication...should be observed...every year...for eight days. (1 Mac.4:56-59)" According to 2 Maccabees, "the Jews celebrated joyfully for eight days as on the feast of Booths."

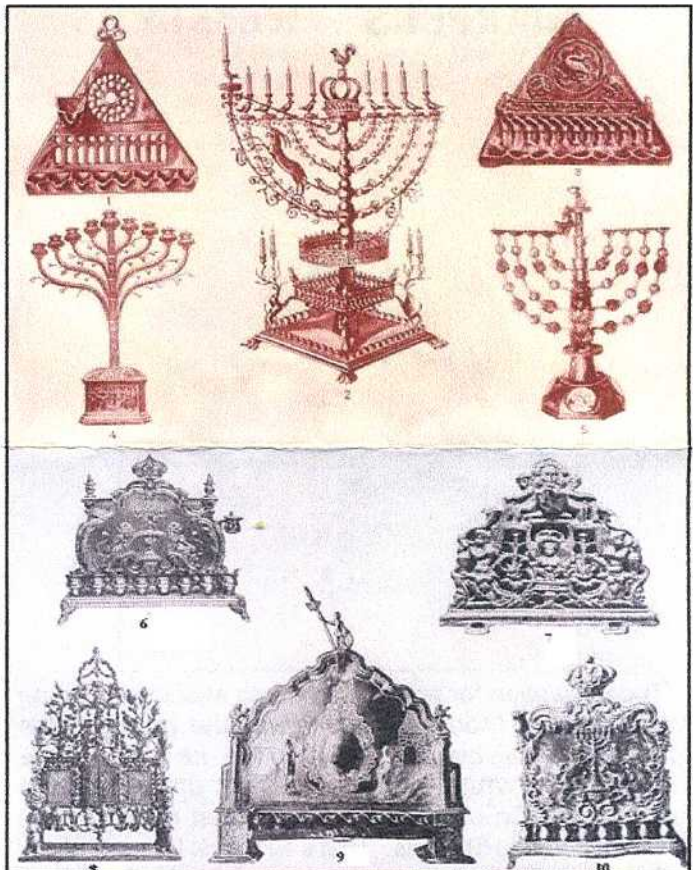
The martyrdom of Hannah and her seven sons has also been linked to Hanukkah. According to the Talmudic story and 2 Maccabees, a Jewish woman named Hannah and her seven sons were tortured and executed by Antiochus for refusing to worship an idol, which would have been a violation of Jewish law.

The name "Hanukkah" is interpreted in many ways.

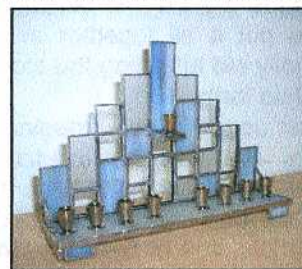
- Some scholars say the word was derived from the Hebrew verb "חנך" meaning to "dedicate" or to "educate." On Hanukkah, Jews mark the rededication of the House of the Lord.

- Others argue that the name can be broken down into "חנו" from the Hebrew word for encampment, and the Hebrew letters, כ"ה which stand for the 25th day of Kislev, the day on which the holiday begins: Hence, the Jews sat in their camp, that is, they rested fighting, on the 25th day of Kislev.

Hanukkah is also the Hebrew acronym for ח' נרות ה' "eight candles as determined by House of Hillel" This is a reference to the disagreement between two rabbinical schools of thought—Hillel and the House of Shammai—on the proper way to light Hanukkah candles. Shammai said that eight candles should be lit from the start, and reduced by one candle every night, whereas Hillel argued in favor of starting with one candle and lighting an additional one every night. Jewish law adopted the position of Hillel.



Various menorah used for Hanukkah. 12th through 19th century, CE



A contemporary, leaded glass or "Tiffany" style Hanukkah menorah.

Time and space preclude explaining the Jewish religion on these pages, however, I wanted to at least give some explanation of Hanukkah as it is celebrated during the Christmas holidays. Anyone wishing to learn more, the internet is a vast storehouse of knowledge and covers the Jewish religion in depth, as it does all religions. ■

Kwanzaa

Kwanzaa, (*matunda ya kwanza*, Swahili for "first fruits"), an African-American holiday observed by African communities throughout the world that celebrates family, community, and culture. It's a seven-day holiday that begins December 26 and continues through to January 1. Kwanzaa has its roots in the ancient African first-fruit harvest celebrations from which it takes its name. However, its modern history begins 1966 when it was created and developed by African in American scholar and activist Maulana Karenga.

Kwanzaa is organized around five fundamental activities common to other African first-fruit celebrations: (1) the ingathering of family, friends, and community; (2) reverence for the creator and creation (including thanksgiving and recommitment to respect the environment and heal the world); (3) commemoration of the past (honoring ancestors, learning lessons and emulating achievements of African history); (4) recommitment to the highest cultural ideals of the African community (for example, truth, justice, respect for people and nature, care for the vulnerable, and respect for elders); and (5) celebration of the "Good of Life" (for example, life, struggle, achievement, family, community, and culture).



Kwanzaa, Scott 3548. Issued several times, this is the 34¢ value issued October 21, 2001.

Kwanzaa is celebrated through rituals, dialogue, narratives, poetry, dancing, singing, drumming and other music, and feasting. A central practice is the lighting of the *mishumaa* (seven candles) of Kwanzaa. A candle is lit each day for each of the *Nguzo Saba* (Seven Principles). These principles are *umoya* (unity); *kujichagulia* (self-determination); *ujima* (collective work and responsibility); *ujamaa* (cooperative economics); *nia* (purpose); *kuumba* (creativity); and *imani* (faith).

Kwanzaa ends with a day of assessment on which celebrants raise and answer questions of cultural and moral grounding and consider their worthiness in family, community, and culture.

Many people think Kwanza is an ancient African celebration. In reality, Kwanza was established in 1966 to provide an opportunity for the African-American community to celebrate their heritage and reinforce positive community values.

An African-American scholar and social activist, Karenga created Kwanzaa in 1966 as the only original African-American holiday. Karenga said his goal was to "...give a Black alternative to the existing holiday and give Blacks an opportunity to celebrate themselves and history, rather than simply imitate the practice of the dominant society." The name Kwanzaa derives from the Swahili phrase "*matunda ya kwanza*", meaning "first fruits". The choice of Swahili, an East African language, reflects its status as a symbol of Pan-Africanism, especially in the 1960s.

Kwanzaa is a festivity that has its roots in the black nationalist movement of the 1960s, and was established as a means to help African-Americans reconnect with their African cultural and historical heritage by uniting in meditation and study of "African traditions" and "common humanist principles."

Kwanzaa celebrates what its founder called "The Seven Principles of Kwanzaa", or *Nguzo Saba* (originally *Nguzo Saba* - "The Seven Principles of Blackness"), which Karenga said "is a communitarian African philosophy" consisting of what Karenga called "the best of African thought and practice in constant exchange with the world." These seven principles comprise *Kawaida*, a Swahili term for tradition and reason. Each of the seven days of Kwanzaa is dedicated to one of the following principles, as follows:

- *Umoja* (Unity) To strive for and to maintain unity in the family, community, nation and race.
- *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination) To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves and speak for ourselves.
- *Ujima* (Collective Work and Responsibility) To build and maintain our community together and make our brothers' and sisters' problems our problems and to solve them together.
- *Ujamaa* (Cooperative Economics) To build and maintain our own stores, shops and other businesses and to profit from them together.
- *Nia* (Purpose) To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.
- *Kuumba* (Creativity) To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.
- *Imani* (Faith) To believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

As is apparent, information is from two different sources and while very similar there appear to be subtle differences. I was one who thought it derived from ancient African sources—NOT! It certainly appears it was an outgrowth of the so-called black power movement of the 60s. That being the case I should be able to start a holiday for German-Americans??? I wonder what Andy Rooney's take on all this is? We have the NAACP, Ebony Magazine, Miss Black America, black television, etc., etc. Andy has already queried what the reaction would be if there was a NAAWP, Cloud Magazine, Miss White America, well you get the idea. I try to present as many views on the Holidays that space allows but have very ambivalent feeling about this one. It must be said, however, that if the principles, as stated, actually are applied within the Black community it would be wonderful. The operative words here are: *actually are applied*. As there are

"Suppose you were an idiot ... And suppose you were a member of Congress ... But I repeat myself." -- Mark Twain

