



E Q U I T Y A S S U R A N C E

Our Mission

To promote an inclusive multicultural environment through education and increased awareness in order to foster acceptance, support, and respect for all community members.

The Cultural Review

Special Holiday Edition

Diversity Around the World

At Christmas we are all saying the same thing...
Merry Christmas or Season's Greetings!

Merry Christmas

Bada Din
Mubarak Ho

Natale
hilare

Gajan
Kristnaskon

Glædelig
Jul

Froehliche
Weihnachten

Mele
kalikimaka

Gledileg Jol

Wesolych Swiat
Bozego Narodzenia

Meri
Kirihihmete

hyvää
joulua

Sung Tan
Chuk Ha

Kala
Christouyenna

Srozhdestovm
Kristovim

Feliz Natal

Joyeux
Noël

Nadolig
Llawen

Nollaig
Shona Dhuit

Feliz
Navidad

Chuc Mung
Giang Sinh

Geseënde
Kersfees

Shinnen omedeto.
Kurisumasu
Omedeto

God Jul

Kuwa na
Krismasi Njema

Linksmu
Kaledu

Buon
Natale

Prejeme Vam Vesele
Vanoce a stastny
Novy Rok

Maligayang
Pasko

Suksun Wan
Christmas



Most memorable Christmas moments



My most memorable Christmas occurred in 1978. I can't tell you exactly where I spent that Christmas Day, or what I did or recall any presents I received. All I can say for certain is that it was an uneventful, bleak and lonely holiday.

I was a first lieutenant stationed at Camp LeJeune Marine Base in North Carolina and because of duty obligations, I wasn't able to take leave to come home to Florida for Christmas. That goes with being a Marine and I accepted it. So I called my mother to break the bad news to her. I was completely surprised when she offered to drive up to North Carolina to cook a Christmas dinner and spend the holiday with me.

As far as I knew, my mother never drove any further than the 60 miles from the family home to Jacksonville. The house where I grew up was less than a half-mile from my high school and never once did mom drive up to see me play football or basketball... North Carolina was an eight-hour drive from her so it seemed unbelievable that she would be willing to drive that long and that far to spend time with me in such a place.

Winter in North Carolina is much colder than Florida and because my house off-base had faulty heating and no television, and with me

being gone on-duty for at least one 24-hour period, I didn't feel comfortable leaving mom there all alone, so I had to decline her offer.

Through the years as I have contemplated this, I came to understand what a mother's love is all about. That tremendous gift remains with me to this day.



~Tony Burke



Christmas morning of 2001 was my most memorable Christmas. In my family, it was a tradition for our kids to sit around the Christmas tree and patiently wait for me to hand them each a gift and say "ready-set-go" before they could each open their gift. This particular year, my 10 year old niece had just joined our little family just 5 days before Christmas. Each gift I handed her was a gift from her mother who had passed away unexpectedly. As she opened each one, we would talk about what her mother must have been thinking when she chose each gift. That year was a mixture of tears and laughter as we appreciated the memories she left us with. This year

will be the most memorable Christmas yet. My niece is expecting her first born child, a precious baby girl, and we will again have a mixture of tears and laughter as we share memories and make up stories of how her mother would have been spoiling her first born granddaughter. In the midst of the sadness, I find myself being truly thankful and blessed that my sister left behind such a beautiful gift that I will forever cherish.



~Carmen Bowman



I decided to move from Emerald Shores 1995-96 to Metro Atlanta. It was the 2nd year living in Atlanta, when I chose the county that had the best education. I was far from family and friends but growing up my parents had emphasized education. They struggled and worked hard to pay for private school for us. As a single parent of two, I could not afford to do that but I felt the same about education.

My children attended a Public Charter School that

was awesome! Green Acres Elementary School in Smyrna, Cobb County, Georgia. They were in a great program which included Brain Gym and other pilot programs the school offered to a select few.

I struggled with paying expenses and Christmas was a big challenge for me! One Christmas the school or my son's teacher asked if I would like gifts for Christmas. My prayers were answered and much more than I thought. I was invited to the company that sponsored us. All I could do is cry at how they blessed us with a carload of gifts. I never forgot. It was the best Christmas they ever had. I still have the warm soft pink robe they gave me.

I have tried my best to pay that forward everywhere I am.

Thank you for asking me and helping me reminisce. I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to all!



~Beatrice Johnson

Cultural recipes



**Hasselback Potatoes
(Swedish)**

INGREDIENTS:

- 8 medium potatoes, peeled
- 1 1/2 ounces butter, melted
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed (mixed with the butter)
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- pepper
- 1 1/2 ounces parmesan cheese (optional)
- 2 tablespoons fresh whole wheat bread crumbs

DIRECTIONS:

Cut the potatoes into thin slices 3/4 way through, leaving a small uncut portion of the potato (fan like). Put half of the butter and garlic in an oven proof dish and place the potatoes in the dish. Sprinkle with salt & pepper. Drizzle with remaining butter and garlic. Bake in 375°F oven (takes about an hour depending on the size of the potato). Baste occasionally with the butter in the dish. After 30 minutes sprinkle with the cheese and bread crumbs- do not baste after putting on the cheese and crumbs. Finish baking until potatoes are done and golden.



**Apple-Pear-Cranberry Kugel
(Jewish)**

INGREDIENTS:

- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup white wine or water
- 3/4 cup currants or raisins (optional)
- 6 oz cranberries (half a bag of frozen cranberries)
- 2 lbs tart apples
- 1/2 lb pears
- 1/4 cup white sugar
- 6 eggs, separated

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Peel and core the apples and pears, and cut them in half. Put them in a pan with the cranberries, and the raisins, if you are using them. Add the wine or water and cover. Cook on low heat for about 20 minutes, or until the apples fall apart. Mash the fruit into large chunks with a fork and add both sugars. Cook over medium-low heat for another 5 minutes. Turn off the heat and allow the mixture to cool. When the mixture has cooled a bit, add the egg yolks to the pan and stir well. Beat the egg whites in a clean bowl with an electric mixer until they form stiff peaks. Gently fold the egg whites into the fruit mixture. Pour into an oiled or buttered baking dish and bake for about 40-50 minutes, or until the top browns. Serve hot or at room temperature.



**Fluffy S'mores Dip
(American)**

INGREDIENTS:

- 8 oz cream cheese, softened and divided
- 1/2 cup powdered sugar
- 3.5 oz marshmallow fluff (about half a standard-sized tub)
- 1 cup mini marshmallows, divided
- 1 (8 oz) tub extra creamy cool whip, thawed
- 1/4 cup cocoa powder
- Graham crackers for dipping

DIRECTIONS:

Using a stand mixer, blend together 4 oz cream cheese, 1/2 cup powdered sugar, and the marshmallow fluff on high until smooth, about 1-2 minutes. With a spoon, gently stir in about 3/4 cup mini marshmallows until marshmallows are completely covered. Set fluffy marshmallow dip aside. In another bowl, blend together remaining 4 oz cream cheese and cocoa powder on high until smooth, about 2-3 minutes. Add whipped cream to bowl and mix on low until cream and chocolate are completely incorporated, about another 2-3 minutes. To assemble the dip: Add fluffy marshmallow and chocolate dips to a single bowl, alternating between the two. When the bowl is full, use a spoon or butter knife to drag through the dip, swirling the colors together. Top the dip with the remaining 1/4 cup mini marshmallows. Serve dip immediately with graham crackers for dipping.



Winter Holidays around the world

St. Lucia's Day: Around Christmas time in Sweden, one of the biggest celebrations is St. Lucia's Day (or St. Lucy's Day) on December 13th. The celebration comes from stories that were told by Monks who first brought Christianity to Sweden.

St Lucia was a young Christian girl who was martyred, killed for her faith, in 304 AD. The most common story told about St Lucia is that she would secretly bring food to the persecuted Christians in Rome, who lived in hiding in the catacombs under the city. She would wear candles on her head so she had both her hands free to carry things. Lucy means 'light' so this is a very appropriate name.

Christmas: Celebrated all around the world, Christmas falls on December 25th each year to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. The word "Christmas" literally means "Christ's Mass," and is a feast central to the Christian liturgical year. Furthermore, it is a civil holiday in many of the world's nations and an integral part of the Christmas and holiday season.

Hanukkah: Chanukah, which has many different transliteration spellings (you've already seen two), is an eight-day Jewish holiday that celebrates the rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem after the Maccabean Revolt (2nd century BCE).

Kwanzaa: This is a week-long holiday celebrated in communities in the United



In some Catholic cultures it's common to have a Mass procession on St. Lucy's feast day with young girls carrying candles, with the lead girl wearing a wreath of lights



President Barack Obama holds up Kylie Schmitter as she and her sister Lainey Schmitter light the menorah during the Hanukkah reception in the Grand Foyer of the White House, Dec. 5, 2013. (Official White House Photo by Lawrence Jackson)

States and Canada, as well as in the Western African Diaspora to honor African heritage in African-American culture. Created by Maulana Karenga in 1966, it is observed from December 26-January 1, and ultimately ends with a feast and the exchange of gifts. There are seven core principles that are celebrated during Kwanzaa, including unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith.

Las Posadas: With its origins in Spain, Las Posadas is a nine-day celebration that is now primarily celebrated in Mexico, Guatemala, and parts of the Southwestern United States. The roots of this holiday are in Catholicism but several different branches of Christian Latinos follow the tradition. During the celebration, a procession moves from house to house with a candle inside a paper lampshade, stopping at each home to sign and pray. Eventually, the pro-

cession ends at a home or church, and the celebration continues with caroling, feasting, and pinata breaking!

Diwali: This past year, this five-day Hindu festival began on November 13th and is an official holiday in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar, among others. The festival is also referred to as the "festival of lights" and celebrates both the attainment of nirvana by Mahavira (an Indian Sage), as well as a Death Anniversary of Swami Dayanand (Hindu religious leader).

The word "Diwali" is a contraction of a word translating to "row of lamps," as the holiday involves the lighting of small clay lamps to symbolize the victory of good over evil. Firecrackers are burst and, during the festival, all those celebrating wear new clothes and share sweets with family and friends.

There are infinitely more worldwide celebrations that you may not have ever heard of, but taking time to learn about just a few more when possible could be invaluable to gaining a better understanding of the world. Keeping that in mind, hopefully now you can extend your holiday season even longer!

<http://www.whychristmas.com/cultures/sweden.shtml>

<http://www.unitedplanet.org/blog/2013/01/03/from-christmas-to-diwali-winter-holidays-around-the-world>

Winter Break

December 19th—January 2

*Christmas is for joy, for giving and sharing, for laughter, for coming together with family and friends, for tinsel and brightly decorated packages...
But mostly, Christmas is for love.*

Wishing you a very Happy Holiday season and a peaceful and prosperous New Year!





Welcome!
Dr. Heidi Maier
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