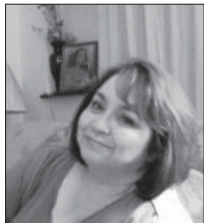


EDITOR'S DESK

Eva Dunn
Editor-in-Chief
Publisher



The Gift of Love

Christmas is such a wondrous holiday, a blessed time filled with love, generosity, wonder and excitement. Families who just recently gathered together celebrating Thanksgiving are now preparing to show that thankfulness in tangible ways, with special gifts. The real date of the birth of Christ, the first Christmas, is not as important as the message: Love... "...for God so Loved the World that He gave His Only Son!"

Just as the Magi brought gifts to the baby Jesus on that starry night so long ago, so we give gifts to those we love, those most important in our lives. Our gifts extend to the workplace, where we acknowledge those who are kind, and thoughtful...our friends at work; to our service people, like mail carriers, bus drivers, and to our pastors, all those people who make a difference in our lives with their friendship, their spirit of love. The spark of love, kindness and compassion, as you touch another life during this holiday season, sets the silver bells in the heavens ringing, in clear and lovely tones. Merry Christmas!

Let it Snow!

It's rare that we have a Snow Day in Sutter Creek, but that happened the second week of December when snow blanketed Calaveras and Amador Counties. Overnight our gardens and yards were transformed into a winter wonderland. Our grandchildren from Imperial Beach happened to be visiting and as they awoke on Monday morning, SNOW greeted their wondering eyes! What fun!

Until the power went off! Thousands of homes went cold until later that afternoon, and in some counties, for days. City offices, businesses and schools were closed and hundreds of people were literally snowed in. My friend Donna was without water for a few days; others could not make it to work. Snow came early this year in our neck of the woods! Close enough to be a White Christmas.

Loving Life

It has been some time now, so I can safely talk about a fantastic lady that I had the privilege of knowing...Marcia Oxford. We had only recently begun conversing through email, although I had known her for over 10 years through the media and all that she was involved in. If it was community, caring, or sharing, Marcia was in the middle of it. From her shock of curly hair to her wide, lipsticked smile and twinkling eyes, she made a memorable presence in our part of the world. Live Life, Love Life, Enjoy Life! No holds barred as they say, no regrets, full speed ahead! Marcia was excited about the Sutter Creek Visitor's Center, in promoting tourism and providing more info for tourists about beloved Sutter Creek. Her excitement rubbed off on me as I began to think of how we could promote our charming town even more, to tell the rest of the world, Hey, come visit us! And then, just like that, the bright star was gone. She is already organizing and re-designing the heavenly streets of gold! Ah yes, I can almost hear her gay laughter! Marcia, you were an inspiration and you are SO missed!

Thanksgiving, Giving thanks in 2009

378 years ago, in 1621, a group of Pilgrims threw a feast which lasted for about three days. Joining them were King Massasoit of the Wampanoag Indians and about 90 of his braves. This feast was one of sincere thanksgiving for having endured the winter and summer in their new land. Had it not been for the Wampanoags helping the new settlers, historians may be hunting for their history like they are some of the early settlers in North Carolina at Ft. Raleigh. Whether you presume the Pilgrim feast was the first Thanksgiving or any one of several in the new colonies, the tradition of giving thanks endures, as it should.

For those few merchants that haven't been hawking their Christmas wares since mid September, this is the time to join with the rest of the selling world in reminding us how much we need to spend on presents, decorations and more food for this season...and anything else they can unload in our cars.

All this in remembrance of a baby, found in a manger, in swaddling cloths, somewhere in the spring of what is estimated to be about 3 BC. We're not given the actual birth date of the Christ child and perhaps for good reason. There is no dispute that December 25's origins have nothing to do with the birth of Christ or much of anything to do with anything associated with Christianity. In fact, like the Easter Egg and Bunny, the events originally celebrated on December 25th come right out of old pagan mythology.

Yet, when we look around us now at all the hype, glamour and glitter, and compare it with the simple, humble birth of the babe in a manger, one has to really wonder if our priorities really match His. Clearly the historical record of his life show little in terms of last minute shopping at Macy's or Penney's for those last minute items, yet His gift to us is probably the greatest gift one could receive. And one you won't find "on sale now at Sears".

So, as we enter this season of Thanksgiving, let us not forget to give thanks. Not only for the comforts and material things we enjoy, but also for things yet to come that we don't and can't understand until the day in which we personally give thanks to the Giver of the greatest gifts, whose humble and simple beginnings we remember, year round. I'm Don Rima and that's the way I see it, From Where I Stand.

SHOP LOCAL

Christmas is only a few days away! Gaily wrapped presents sit under your tree, homes are decorated brightly for the season, the wonderful aroma of cookies baking fill the house. Last minute shopping is also lots of fun as you grab sale items; but remember to shop locally! Our gold country towns carry unique gift items you can't find anywhere else, and many are handmade. Delightful stores and shops throughout the area carry items, like glassware forged into exquisite works of art, stained glass butterflies, hand-crafted Italian music boxes, ceramic bowls, and so much more. A plethora of delights to choose gifts!

APOLOGIES

The Gold Country Times sincerely apologizes for leaving out the bylines for the following last month: Lions, Tigers and Bears, Oh My! written by staff reporter John Benton; Placerville Art Walk written by staff reporter Suzy McMinn.

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Granddaughter Ella, visiting from Imperial Beach, CA is full of joy in the newly fallen snow that surprised residents on Monday, December 7 at her grandparents home in Sutter Creek. *Photo by Tim Dunn*

Photography Exhibition

The Central Sierra Arts Council announces the InFocus 2010, the 23rd Annual Photography Exhibition. The InFocus 2010 Exhibition will be held at the Post Gallery, home of the Central Sierra Arts Council offices at 48 South Washington Street in downtown Sonora. Entry information and entry forms are available at the Arts Council and at www.centralsierraarts.org. Entries should be delivered to the Central Sierra Arts Council on December 29, 30, or January 2, 2010 between 11am and 5pm, for judging on January 3, 2010. Each artist may submit up to four entries. The cost is \$10 per entry for CSAC members and \$15 for non-members. All works must have been completed within the last two years. Maximum framed size is 60" total width and height. All works will be for sale and a 35% gallery commission applies. All works must be framed with taped wire attached. Prizes of \$100 for first place, \$75 for second place and \$50 for third place will be awarded in three categories: Mono-chrome, Color, and Alternative Process (including Black and White, and Color manipulations). Manipulation is defined as to change the image from a realistic interpretation as seen through the camera's lens and typically applies to contemporary computer generated art effects and traditional solarizations, double exposures, etc. The exhibition opens on January 8, 2010 and the Awards Reception is planned for Sat, January 16. The show will remain up through January 30. For more information, 209/532-2787.

The Gold Country Times

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