December is a confluence of a varied family of religious and cultural celebrations. In the midst of these observances is an astronomical phenomenon known by astronomers as the winter solstice; we call it the beginning of winter (December 21, 2018). The setting is as intriguingly colorful as the endearing tale of the Nutcracker.

As I collect my notes on this tapestry woven with the cloth of history, religion, and culture, I am mindful of the lessons wrought by the human conditions immersed in the trials, joys, familial love, and, above all else, the belief in a Universal Power that binds all of us together as constant reminders of who we are and how we came to be on this Planet we call Earth. While our paths may sometimes differ, our destinies are intertwined and, I believe, are ultimately the same. I have gathered the following information from Internet sources.

Hanukkah began this year on December 2. It is a Jewish festival commemorating the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem at the time of the Maccabean Revolt against the Seleucid Empire. It is also known as the Festival/Miracle of Lights. The observance lasts for eight days.

The winter solstice, also known as midwinter, is an astronomical phenomenon marking the day with the shortest period of daylight and the longest night of the year. It occurs when one of the Earth’s poles has its maximum tilt away from the Sun. It happens twice yearly, once in each hemisphere. In the Northern Hemisphere this is the December solstice and in the Southern Hemisphere this is the June solstice.

Christmas is an annual festival commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ, observed primarily on December 25 as a religious and cultural celebration among billions of people around the world. A feast central to the Christian liturgical year, it is preceded by the season of Advent or the Nativity Fast and initiates the season of Christmastide, which historically in the West lasts twelve days and culminates on Twelfth Night; in some traditions, Christmastide includes an octave. Christmas Day is a public holiday in many of the world's nations, is celebrated religiously by a majority of Christians, as well as culturally by many non-Christians, and forms an integral part of the holiday season centered around it Christians, as well as culturally by many non-Christians, and forms an integral part of the holiday season centered around it.

Kwanzaa is a celebration held in the United States and in other nations of the African diaspora in the Americas and lasts a week. The celebration honors African heritage in African-American culture and is observed from December 26 to January 1, culminating in a feast and gift-giving. Kwanzaa has seven core principles. It was created by Maulana Karenga and was first celebrated in 1966–67.
We should enjoy all these celebrations of our collective heritage as “earthlings”, but let us also share the love and caring that comes to all of us, particularly with those less fortunate than we, during this magical month of December!

**NSARTA HEARTS FOR DECEMBER**

*Michelle Bibb*

Our December “Hearts of NSARTA” are Glennie Lecocke and Karin Stanley. These ladies began their careers as teachers and retired as NEISD principals. As members of the Hospitality Committee, they arrive early on meeting days to set up, decorate, and then stay late to clean up. They love to travel, are Elf Louise volunteers, and are active in their communities. NSARTA is proud to have these hard working ladies as members.

**Glennie Lecocke** was born in Stafford, Texas. She shares, “I was welcomed to my family by two older sisters, Gladys and Gloria. We were affectionately called the “Three Gs”, a name that has remained with us since childhood. My dad worked for the Southern Pacific Railroad and mom was a homemaker and seamstress. When I was six, my dad was promoted and transferred to San Antonio where I started school at Rayburn Drive Elementary. When I was in the third grade, dad’s job took us to Uvalde. We lived in Uvalde until the summer before my junior year of high school. Once again dad was transferred. We returned to San Antonio where I attended Douglas MacArthur High School. I remember feeling a little overwhelmed at first by the size of MacArthur compared to the much smaller Uvalde High School where I knew everyone. Fortunately, I was in the band and this helped me adjust and make new friends.

After graduating from high school I attended San Antonio College and then transferred to Southwest Texas State University. While attending SWTSU, I commuted from San Antonio and worked for Avis Rent A Car as a rental agent. I graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education and a kindergarten endorsement.

**My teaching career began in 1973 when I was hired in Northeast School District at Clear Spring Elementary as a kindergarten teacher. I felt the kindergarten endorsement certainly was a blessing. Since I changed grade levels and also taught fourth and fifth grade at Clear Spring, some of my kinder students had me for their teacher two or even three times.**

After teaching several years, I returned to school at UTSA. In 1981, I graduated with a Master’s Degree in Educational Mid-Management. My first administrative position in Northeast was at East Terrell Hills Elementary as the Administrative Aide. I then became an assistant principal at Northern Hills Elementary. My first principal-ship was at Colonial Hills Elementary where I stayed for six years. I then moved to Coker Elementary and remained there until my retirement.

In addition to earning a MS at UTSA, I also earned something else after graduation – a Mrs. While attending a summer session, a classmate set me up with her husband’s friend, Don. After weeks of talking on the phone, we had our first date, and the rest is history. Don and I have been married for 32 years. Not only have I been blessed with a wonderful husband, but also a lovely step-daughter. Our daughter is now married with two children, Casey and Jacob. Don and I love being Papa and Nane to them.

In 2011 Don and I made a big decision. We decided we both would retire in June. Within a few weeks of each other, Don retired from his job in Pharmaceutical Sales and I retired from Northeast School District as principal of Coker. We have enjoyed retirement and the opportunity to travel. Until this past year, I stayed involved in education by substituting for Northeast administrators, serving as test administrator for NAEP, and scoring or supervising various state tests at the Pearson Corporation.
I currently participate in Bible Study at Holy Trinity Catholic Church where Don and I are members. I also have enjoyed becoming a part of NSARTA and taking part in the Book Club and serving on the Hospitality Committee. Future plans include a trip to Italy which is on my bucket list.”

Karin Stanley  “I’ve always considered myself a pretty lucky girl. Wonderful opportunities and adventures have been presented to me throughout the years. I was born and raised in Tyler, Texas, but since my parents owned a hotel in Mexico City, I lived there the first five years of my life. I remember trips to Acapulco, visiting the pyramids and flying back and forth to Tyler. I went to a private school in Mexico my first year and then we moved to Tyler, permanently. I was that child that sat in the classroom not knowing what the teacher was saying. I had to learn English fast!

Growing up in Tyler was a great experience. We were fortunate to be able to ride our bikes anywhere and I felt like I had the best of friends. I graduated from Robert E. Lee High in Tyler and went on to Tyler Junior College where some more adventures began. I was a member of the Apache Belles who were, at that time, the dance team for the Dallas Cowboys. Traveling and performing at many Cowboy games was such an experience. I remember (for those who know) standing behind Bob Lilly on the sidelines and seeing the tallest, largest man I had ever seen!!

My last two years of college were spent at Angelo State University in San Angelo. I did not want to go to San Angelo, but since I had received a full dance scholarship, my parents said “You’re going!” Boy, am I glad I did. I loved West Texas and the friends I made were the best!

The summer I graduated from college, I received a phone call from the principal of Robert E. Lee High asking me to come for an interview! I was so excited to be able to come home and work at my old school. But then, the principal said he was calling from San Antonio!! Oh my, what is a girl to do? So I drove to “the valley” and realized that it was only South Texas, toured LHS and said “YES”, I’ll come to San Antonio!

Forty three years later, I have been lucky enough to work for a great school district as a teacher, assistant principal, principal and HR director. The teachers, students and friends I met along the way fill my heart with great memories. I retired in December of 2015, and since then I have enjoyed more time with my daughter and her family, my son and the most wonderful group of friends anyone could have. I’ve been on a cruise, taken trips to Ireland and Germany and recently enjoyed a trip to the Holy Lands, with a side trip to Petra in Jordan. This spring I’ll be touring Italy.

So yes, I think I have been a lucky girl!”
LEGISLATIVE/FOUNDATION  Carlos Ortiz

Now that all of you are shopping for the Holidays, you will notice your money and how it affects your budget. This should give you ideas for your letters which we will write in January. If you know of anyone who needs help paying their medical bills or Social Security Medicare Part B payment, please have them check the [www.TRTF.org](http://www.TRTF.org) for a “Helping Hand” application. The Foundation is ready to help those in need. Also you may review the applications for the “Scholarship” and “Grants”.

HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON!

Program  Peggy Peterson  rpete4321@satx.rr.com  210.373.3961

HAPPY DECEMBER! NSARTA celebrates December with our annual Christmas Luncheon. Heavenly Gourmet Catering will again bring a delicious meal and our talented membership will raise the roof with a joyful and spirited sing-a-long! It is the perfect way to get into the holiday spirit!

However, if you are looking for more to celebrate, check out the National Today website (nationaltoday.com) where you will find a celebration for every day. Some are meaningful and special and some are just plain silly, but fun!

Here are a few of my favorites:

a. U.S. National Guard Day -- Dec 13
b. National Wreaths Across America Day -- Dec. 15
c. National Chocolate Covered Anything Day -- Dec. 16
d. National Sangria Day -- Dec. 20th
e. National Short Person Day -- Dec. 22
f. National Fruitcake Day -- I’m sure a favorite of ALL! -- Dec. 27
g. National Call A Friend Day -- Dec. 28
h. National Bacon Day -- Perfect end to another great year! Dec. 30

NSARTA MEET-UP NEWS -- Elf Louise sends a sleigh full of thanks to 20 NSARTA volunteers that spent 2 days stuffing envelopes and organizing family gift packets. They count on us to assist with the important job of preparing to surprise 50,000 children with gifts on Christmas! What an organization! It is an honor to be part of it.

Mark Your Calendar for January 16! We will kick-off 2019 with a bit of fun and laughter!

Until then, may all your celebrations be merry and bright!

Happy Chanukah! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

TREASURER’S REPORT  Carolyn Pfeiffer  210-372-434 carolynpfeiffer48@gmail.com

As of 12/4/18, In our checking account, we have: $2,036.36

Merry Christmas to All!!!
Sympathy cards were sent to the family of Mollie (Porter) Burke, who passed away November 7, and to Linda Nolder, whose mother-in-law passed away. Our prayers are with these families.

STITCHERY   Ledru Barker

We continue to deliver pillows and quilts to the VA Hospital. We invite you to come and socialize while we stuff pillows. So far we have given 386 pillows along with six crocheted afghans and 12 quilts. Have a great Christmas and a happy new year.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

HOSPITALITY   Barbara Rothe  380-8150, Linda Nolder  490-1035

Refreshments for our November meeting were provided by NSARTA. Thank you to our wonderful treasurer for selecting treats for the meeting. Carolyn Pfeiffer wears many, many NSARTA hats and now she is our very own “caterer”. We will not be serving refreshments at our December meeting. Coffee and tea will be provided for you to enjoy before the meeting begins at 10:00 a.m. After our Christmas “meeting” and entertainment, our Heavenly Gourmet catered lunch will be served by the Hospitality Committee. NSARTA Board Members will provide refreshments for the January, 2019 meeting. Michele Bibb  494-8197

CHILDRENS’ BOOK DRIVE   Sherlyn Valentin, Nancy Dooley, Pat Loewe

Happy Holidays to all! NSARTA members distributed over 700 books in 2018. What a successful year for the Children’s Book Project all due to your support. The book project has a good start for 2019 with 265 books and $134.65 in donations. This spring we will be working toward our goal of giving each student of Valley Hi Elementary a book of their very own.

VOLUNTEERING   Janet Pennock  japennock57@yahoo.com, 979-417-3876

The year has come to an end. I will be collecting everyone’s volunteer hours in January and turning in my report to TRTA. If your hours are in the gray binder, please complete the form. If you have a form at home please return it to me at the December or January meetings. You could also send your hours to me via email or text. My email is japennock57@icloud.com. My phone number is 979-417-3876, leave me your first and last name and number of volunteer hours for the year. I will respond to your email and text.

Have a Merry Christmas!
### Legislative information from Carlos

#### DISTRICT XX ELECTED OFFICIALS
**86th LEGISLATURE**

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<td>Justin Rodriguez (125)</td>
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**REPRESENTATIVES**
The Honorable (full name)  
Texas House of Representatives  
P. O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768-2910

**SENATORS**
The Honorable (full name)  
Texas Senate  
P. O. Box 12068  
Austin, TX 78711-2068

Dear Mr./Ms. (last name):  
Dear Senator (last name):
MEMBERSHIP  Harold Black

Everyone who had renewed or become new members by September 13th, should have received your copy of the NSARTA directory for 2018-2019.

We will be printing an update page on new members we have gotten since the yearbook went out. Please add this to your book.

Welcome!

You are invited to join us in the efforts we are making to improve retirement benefits and to be of service in our community.

We meet at:
SAN PEDRO PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
14900 SAN PEDRO AVENUE
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS, 78232
210-494-6560

We always meet on the third Wednesday of each month. We have our social gathering at 9:30 a.m. and our meeting is from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Our dues are $50 - $35 of this goes to the state.
Come join in the fun!!

Welcome!
HEALTHY COOKING SUBSTITUTIONS

Want to maintain a healthy weight—and make your body more fit to fight cancer? Trimming calories and fat from the foods you eat can help. Unless otherwise noted, substitute the same amount as the original recipe calls for.

Instead of:
Bacon .......................................................... Substitute:
Bread crumbs.............................................. Lean turkey bacon
Butter, margarine or oil (1 cup)........... Toasted wheat germ or whole wheat bread crumbs
Butter, margarine, or vegetable oil..... 1/2 cup apple butter or applesauce
Canned cream soups................................. Cooking spray, chicken or vegetable broth, or olive oil
Cheese (cheddar, Swiss, jack).............. Canned broth-based soups
Cream .......................................................... Reduced-fat/part-skim cheese
Cream (for soup thickening).............. Evaporated fat-free milk
Cream cheese (1 cup)............................... Pureed potatoes or vegetables
Eggs (1 egg).................................................. 1/2 cup ricotta cheese pureed w/ 1/2 cup fat-free cream cheese
Flour (all-purpose, 1 cup)............... 2 egg whites or 1/4 cup egg substitute
Ground beef ............................................... 1 c whole wheat flour or 1/2 c whole wheat flour + 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
Mayonnaise............................................... Extra-lean ground beef or ground turkey breast
Meat/poultry for stir-fry........................ Reduced-fat or fat-free mayonnaise
Oil and vinegar dressing.................. Extra-firm tofu, cubed
(3 parts oil to 1 part vinegar).............. 1 part olive oil + 1 part flavored vinegar + 1 part orange juice
Sour cream................................................ Fat-free sour cream or unflavored Greek yogurt
Tuna (oil packed)..................................... Water-packed tuna (rinse to reduce sodium)
White rice............................................... Brown rice, bulgur, kasha, quinoa or whole wheat couscous
Whole milk............................................. Fat-free milk

Source: MD Anderson Cancer Center; www.mdanderson.org/focused

HEALTHY BAKING SUBSTITUTES

Instead of:
Buttermilk (full fat)................................. Substitute:
Chocolate (milk or white)...................... Low-fat or fat-free buttermilk
Dark chocolate........................................
Frosting..................................................... Pureed fruit or “dust” with powdered sugar
Fresh fruit or fruit canned in water or own juice
Fudge sauce............................................... Chocolate syrup
Evaporated skim milk..........................
Milk.......................................................... Skim/fat-free milk
Whole...................................................... Graham cracker crumb crust
Sweetened condensed milk (full fat)..... Low-fat or nonfat sweetened condensed milk
Applesauce, honey or reduced calorie, sugar-free syrup
Unsweetened baking chocolate (1 oz).... 3 Tbsp. unsweetened cocoa powder PLUS 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil or margarine

Want to add some cancer-fighting power to your holiday sweets? All it takes is a little dark chocolate. Research suggest that the antioxidants in dark chocolate help protect the body from cancer. Added bonus: eating small amounts of chocolate may reduce your chances of both heart disease and stroke.

Source: MD Anderson Cancer Center; www.mdanderson.org/focused
NSARTA
14219 Turtle Rock St.
San Antonio, Texas 78232

OR CURRENT RESIDENT

MERRY CHRISTMAS

DECEMBER 2018