

NEWSLETTER

December 2007



*Christmas is a very special time of the year.
Shopping lists, kitchen smells, children singing, Jingle Bells.
Colored lights, falling snow, Fireplace, with amber glow.
Trees adorned, a holly bough, Parties, friends and mistletoe.*

http://members.shaw.ca/christmastime/merry_christmas.html

★ Christmas Traditions ★

There are many different customs that make the Christmas season so special. When were some of the customs first used and where did they come from? Lets take a look at some of the more popular yuletide traditions!

People once believed that...

- ⓐ it was good luck for the first person up on Christmas day to open a door and "let Christmas in."
- ⓐ bells placed near a baby or small child would keep evil spirits away
- ⓐ the number of days between the first snowfall and Christmas told how many snowfalls would come before spring
- ⓐ a cricket chirping at Christmas brought good luck
- ⓐ sparks from a yule log would create warmth in human souls.
- ⓐ a candle left burning all night in an empty room on Christmas eve would bring light, warmth, and plenty all year.

Holly

A symbol of peace and joy, the holly tree was often the site for settling quarrels. Holly also was planted near a home to frighten off witches and protect it from thunder and lightning.

Gifts

A Christmas gift symbolizes the gifts taken to Bethlehem by the Wise Men. Each gift foretold what Jesus would become: a king (gold), a high priest (frankincense), and a great physician and healer (myrrh).

Reindeer

No one knows for sure, but Scandinavians may have brought the idea of Christmas reindeer to the United States. They became famous because of Dr. Clement Moore's poem of 1823, in which Dancer, Prancer, Donder, Blitzen, and the other reindeer were introduced as the animals who pull Santa's sleigh. Until the 19 century, St. Nicholas had ridden on a donkey, on a horse, or in the sky chariot drawn by horses.

Ornaments

The first Christmas tree ornaments were made at home with available materials. Some of these included fruits, gilded nuts, gingerbread figures, and paper roses. Later, beautifully colored glass balls replaced the fruits.

Stockings

The custom of hanging stockings on Christmas Eve began in 300A.D., when a young bishop in Asia Minor became famous for his kindness to others. Later known as Saint Nicholas, the bishop often left gifts for people, but didn't wait for thanks. One night, he climbed onto a rooftop and dropped a gift down the chimney. The gift fell into a stocking that had been hung to dry. Through the years, children began leaving things, from wooden shoes to stockings, to be filled with goodies on Christmas Eve by the generous fellow who is known to us today as Santa Claus.



<http://members.shaw.ca/christmastime/christmastraditions.html>

At the American Corner



Join us in the celebration of Christmas!



*Merry Christmas and
a Happy New Year!*



World AIDS Day

According to UNAIDS estimates, there are now 39.5 million people living with HIV, including 2.3 million children. During 2006 some 4.3 million people became newly infected with the virus. Around half of all people who become infected with HIV do so before they are 25 and are killed by AIDS before they are 35.

Started on 1st December 1988, World AIDS Day is not just about raising money, but also about increasing awareness, fighting prejudice and improving education. World AIDS Day is important in reminding people that HIV has not gone away, and that there are many things still to be done.

It is common to hold memorials to honor persons who have died from HIV/AIDS on this day. Government and health officials also observe, often with speeches or forums on the AIDS topics. **Since 1995 the President of the United States has made an official proclamation on World AIDS Day.** Governments of other nations have followed suit and issued similar announcements.

The theme for World AIDS Day 2007

World AIDS Day was originally organised by UNAIDS, who chose the theme after consultation with other organisations. In 2005 UNAIDS handed over responsibility for World AIDS Day to an independent organisation known as [The World AIDS Campaign](#) (WAC).

The WAC's slogan for their work is "**Stop AIDS: Keep the Promise**". This is an appeal to governments, policy makers and regional health authorities to ensure that they meet the many targets that have been set in the fight against HIV and AIDS, and especially the promise of universal access to HIV treatment, care, support and prevention services by 2010. **This campaign will run until 2010, with a related theme chosen for World AIDS Day each year.**

The 2007 theme, "**leadership**", highlights the need for innovation, vision and perseverance in the face of the AIDS challenge. The campaign calls on all sectors of society such as families, communities and civil society organizations - rather than just governments - to take the initiative and provide leadership on AIDS.

The AIDS red ribbon

The red ribbon is an international symbol of AIDS awareness that is worn by people all year round and particularly around World AIDS Day to demonstrate care and concern about HIV and AIDS, and to remind others of the need for their support and commitment.

The red ribbon started as a "grass roots" effort; as a result there is no one official AIDS ribbon manufacturer, and many people make their own. It's easily



done - just use some ordinary red ribbon and a safety pin!

<http://www.avert.org/worldaid.htm>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_AIDS_Day

ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR



The attack on Pearl Harbor was a pre-emptive military strike on the United States Pacific Fleet base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii by the Empire of Japan's Imperial Japanese Navy, on the morning of Sunday, December 7, 1941 that made the United States enter World War II. Two aerial attack waves, totaling 350 aircraft, were launched from six aircraft carriers with the intent to destroy the United States Pacific Fleet.

The attack permanently destroyed two U.S. Navy battleships, one minelayer, two destroyers, and 188 aircraft; personnel losses were 2,333 killed and 1,139 wounded. Japanese losses were minimal, at 29 aircraft and five midget submarines, with 65 servicemen killed or wounded.

The intent of the strike was to protect Imperial Japan's advance into Malaya and the Dutch East Indies - for their natural resources such as oil and rubber - by neutralizing the U.S. Pacific Fleet. Both the US and Japan had long-standing contingency plans for war in the Pacific, developed during the 1930s as tension between the two countries steadily increased. Japan's expansion into Manchuria and later French Indochina were greeted with steadily increasing levels of embargoes and sanctions by the United States. In 1940, the US halted shipments of airplanes, parts, machine tools and aviation gas to Japan, which Japan interpreted as an unfriendly act. Nevertheless, Washington continued to export oil to Japan, in part because it was understood in Washington that cutting off oil exports would be an extreme step given Japanese dependence on them. In the summer of 1941, after Japanese expansion into Indochina, the US ceased even export of oil to Japan and because American restrictions on internal oil use



was beginning. President Franklin D. Roosevelt had earlier moved the Pacific Fleet to Hawaii and ordered a buildup in the Philippines, to counterbalance Japanese aggression in the Far East. The Japanese high command was certain an attack on the United Kingdom's colonies would inevitably bring the U.S. into the war. And so a pre-emptive strike appeared to be one way Japan could avoid U.S. interference in the Pacific.

The attack was one of the most important engagements of World War II. Occurring before a formal declaration of war, it was the last factor in the American public's move

from isolationism to an acceptance that war was unavoidable. Roosevelt called December 7, 1941 "... a date which will live in infamy."

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attack_on_Pearl_Harbor

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY - DECEMBER 10th

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

December 10, 1948

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted and proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

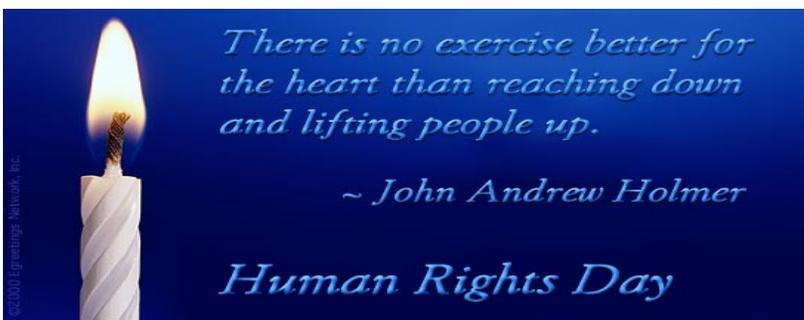
Preamble

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people, Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law, Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations, Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in cooperation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, therefore, The General Assembly, Proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance,

both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.



There is no exercise better for the heart than reaching down and lifting people up.

~ John Andrew Holmer

Human Rights Day

To read the entire declaration you can go to : <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/60372.htm>

Highlights from November Programs



On November 14, 2007, in the Daut Pasin Amam Gallery, our host institution - the City Library "Braka Miladinovci" celebrated its 62nd anniversary.

Elena Bocevska, IRC US Embassy Officer and Olivera Trajkova, Coordinator of AC Skopje, received a Certificate of Appreciation for their support and cooperation. A Certificate of Appreciation was also given to the American Corner Skopje.



In observance of the International Education Week (November 11-16) the American Corner Skopje organized the presentation "American University Experience" on November 15th, 2007. The Event was led by



Ms. Amy Storrow, Assistant Public Affairs Officer in the US Embassy and lectured



by Fulbright students and scholars Erin Traeger, Cristina Rodrigez, and Michele O'Neill and Bratislav Stankovic. The Fulbright students spoke

about their student days and experiences from their university life in the USA at the Arizona and Iowa State Universities, whereas the Fulbright Scholars, Michele O'Neill-Associate Professor of Finance and Bratislav Stankovic, PhD spoke about the differences between the Macedonian and the American Educational system.

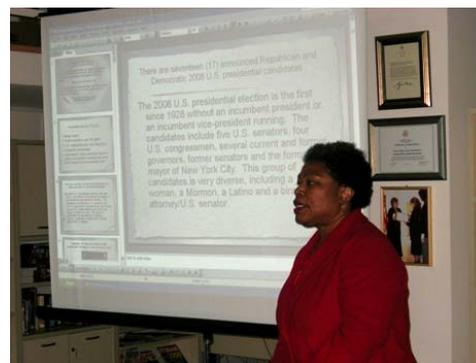
The second presentation in observance of the International Education Week - **“Education, Internships, Scholarships”** was the presentation given by Bojana Nizamovska, the Coordinator of the Network Scholarship Program, Dejan Dokuzovski- former exchange student at the University of Georgia in Athens, as her guest speaker and Vase Jordanoska, representative of the Macedonian American Alumni Association. The attendees were informed about the latest scholarships available, Bojan’s experience as an exchange student and Vase’s experience as an intern. Useful tips were given on how to write the best entry essay, what it takes to be given the privilege to become an exchange student and what needs to be done during the application process.



On November 29th, 2007 the American Corner Skopje was extremely pleased to welcome Ms Myra M. Brown, IRC Officer for Mediterranean Europe. This was Ms Brown’s second lecture at the AC Skopje, so most of our members were



already familiar with Ms. Brown herself, her interactive style of presenting and her sense of humor.



The presentation **“US Presidential Elections: As the World Watches”** was an introduction of the candidates running for President of the United States in the 2008 campaign, the voting blocs, the media impact and the more frequent use of YouTube for advertisements (“Is it worth to spend \$75 million dollars on TV when you can YouTube for free?”) and within the debates. During the presentation, numerous videos from the current and the previous campaigns were shown to the audience. Everyone was informed about the ways certain voting groups are targeted by the media and the candidates themselves.

December Monthly Program

❁ **December 01, 2007** , Whole week event
 ○ **World Aids Day - Book Display and Paper Show**



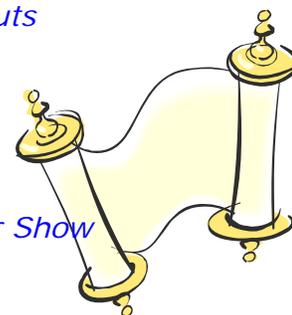
❁ **December 01, 2007**, at 08:00 o'clock
TOEFL Testing 

❁ **December 05, 2007**, at 18:00 o'clock
 ○ **Conversation Hour - With PCV Marc Ackerman**



❁ **December 07, 2007**, Whole day event
 ○ **Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day – Handouts**

❁ **December 08, 2007**, at 09:00 o'clock
 ○ **TOEFL Testing** 



❁ **December 10, 2007**, Whole week event
 ○ **Human Rights Day, Book Display and Paper Show**

❁ **December 10, 2007**, at 13:00 o'clock
 ○ **Certificate Awarding Ceremony for the Essay Competition,**
 With Peace Corps and ELTAM



❁ **December 10, 2007**, AIDS Workshop
 ○ **With high school students**

❁ **December 12, 2007**, at 18:00 o'clock
 ○ **Conversation Club, With PCV Marc Ackerman**



❁ **December 15, 2007**, At 16:00 o'clock
 ○ **TOEFL Testing** 

❁ **December 18, 2007**, At 18:00 o'clock
 ○ **Public Speaking Class, With PCV Marc Ackerman**



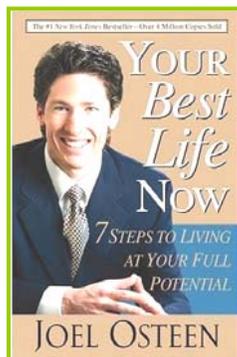
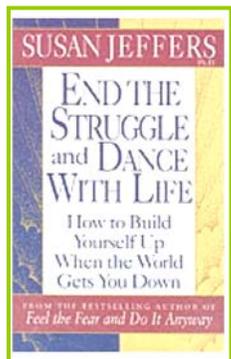
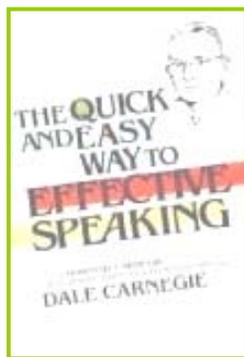
❁ **December 21, 2007**, at 18:00 o'clock
 ○ **Xmas Children Story Hour, With PCV Emily Audette**



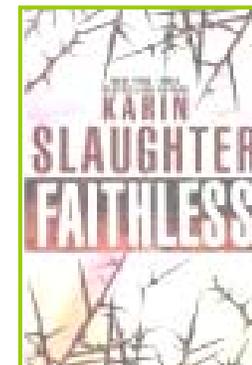
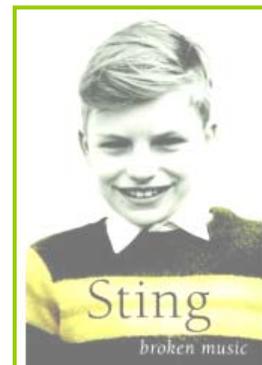
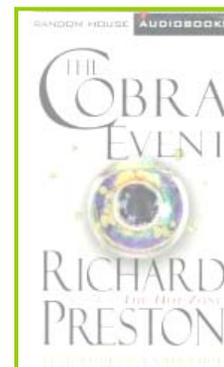
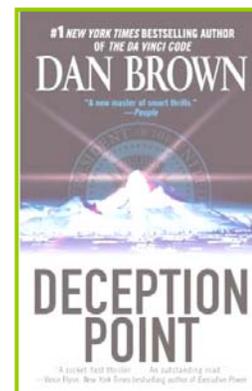
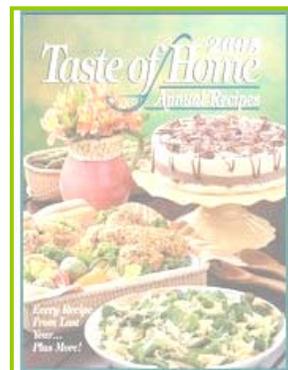
❁ **December 24, 2007**, Whole day event
 ○ **In observance of Christmas Day,**
Open House Day



New Books at the American Corner



1. Knight's Cross – E.M. Nathanson; Aaron Bank
2. *The Corps – Call to Arms* – W.E.B. Griffin;
3. **Black Lightning** – John Saul;
4. *Take Her Deep – A Submachine Against Japan In The World War II-* Admiral I.J. Galantin;
5. **Faithless** – Karin Slaughter;
6. *Requiem for a Glass Heart* – David Lindsey;
7. **Deception Point** – Dan Brown;
8. *Inspecting the Vaults* – Eric McCormack
9. *Walt Disney video* – Welcome;
10. **End the Struggle and Dance With Life – How to build Yourself Up When the World Gets You Down** – Susan Jeffers, PhD
11. **Your Best Life Now – 7 Steps to Living At Your Full Potential** – Joel Osteen;
12. **The Quick and Easy Way to Effective Speaking** – Dale Carnegie;
13. **Taste of Home – Annual Recipes**
14. **Audio Book: The Cobra Event** – Preston Richard
15. *Audio Book: The adventures of Sherlock Holmes*
16. **Broken Music: A Memoir** - Sting



Books No. 1-8 were donated by Mr. Patrick W. J. Haala

Please note that the American Corner will be **closed** on **December 8th**, in observance of St. Clement Day, **December 15th** due to the TOEFL Testing and on **December 25th**, in observance of Christmas.