



Dear REACH families,

Winter 2012

Note from Vicki

We are off to a great start for the REACH study. We really appreciate all of you who have contacted us with changes of address, changes of contact information, or even with best times to reach you. So far, we are half-way through our first cohort of participants. The first cohort consists of people who are on average 22-23 years old. In 2013, we will contact the second cohort (ages 21-22), and in 2014 we will contact the final cohort (currently ages 20-21). We have tried to be as accommodating as possible, in terms of time and location. Now that the data are complete for the Transition Times Study, we can finish writing papers about that study. In the next newsletter, I promise to provide you with some results from the Transition Times Study. To date, we have one paper accepted for publication, another under revision, and a third submitted.

Because we are sending this newsletter in our holiday card, we decided to do some investigating as to how holidays are spent around the world. We hope you enjoy some of our findings. We are always looking for ideas for newsletters. If you have one, please send us an email or gives us a call. We would be happy to follow up on your ideas.

Happy Holidays!

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Ancient Traditions- Saturnalia

Saturnalia was an ancient Roman festival in honor of the deity Saturn originally held December 17 and later expanded with festivities through December 23. The holiday was celebrated with a sacrifice at the Temple of Saturn in the Roman Forum and a public banquet, followed by private gift-giving, continual partying, and a carnival atmosphere that overturned Roman social norms: gambling was permitted, and masters provided table service for their slaves. Scholars view aspects of the Saturnalia festival as the origin of some later holiday customs, like the practice of gift giving. Also during the ancient festival, human-shaped biscuits were consumed and dance-like singing was performed in the streets, which makes it a precursor of modern gingerbread man and caroling.

Japan and Pacific Rim Traditions



Though not a Christian country, Christmas is still celebrated by areas that are predominantly Christian. Most holiday traditions are western in nature but there are some Japanese touches added. The nativity play is one such popular tradition but the children will often be dressed in native costume rather than the tradi-

tional costumes. Santa Claus resembles a traditional kindly old man carrying a pack (Hotaisosho). In Japanese culture this figure is considered one of the gods or priests. It is said he has eyes in the back of his head so children are very careful to behave when it is rumored he is about.

Ornaments are made of

paper and are created using Origami. The most common ornament created is a paper crane. The crane is a symbol of peace and long life. Tradition states that if you fold a thousand cranes you will live a long life.

Diwali

Diwali is considered to be a festival for the renewal of life for it is on this day that old lamps are thrown out and new lamps are brought in. Hindus believe that the souls of the ancestors come to visit their homes on Diwali and the new lamps will help the souls find their

way. The lamps are placed everywhere: ledges, balconies, rooftops and along garden paths. A house may contain as many as a thousand of these lamps. The children receive presents in celebration of Diwali. Not only do these lamps guide the souls of the dead, they

also guide Lakshmi to their houses so that she will come down on the wings of a heavenly swan to bring them prosperity for the coming year.



Junkanoo

The holiday celebrations of the Bahamas, called Junkanoo, take place on December 26th and January 1st. Between 2 am and dawn, an enormous parade presents hundreds of people along with dancing, music, and vibrant costumes.

The origin of the word

"junkanoo" is rather obscure. Some people believe it comes from the French "L'inconnu" which means, "the unknown" in reference to the masks worn by the paraders.

Junkanoo is thought to have evolved from the joyous celebrations of Caribbean

slaves when they were given several days off around Christmas to spend with their families.

Unusual Holiday Traditions

Locals in the Welsh countryside stick a horse skull on a pole and walk around under a blanket. Known as a Mari Lwyd, the horse visits pubs and homes to sing carols.



Nativity scenes in Barcelona and its Catalonia region feature Caganer, "the defecator." The short man with pants pulled down is a popular Christmas buy. It is also associated with a painted log that supposedly

poops out candy for children. The Caganer can also be found in other European cultures: France, Naples, and Portugal. Though the tradition is highly popular and beloved, there are, however, divided opinions among the local population as to whether it is really appropriate.



Burn Bockjaevel –Burn the damn goat!



The Yule Goat is one of the oldest Scandinavian and Northern European Yule symbols and traditions. It originally denoted the goat that was slaughtered during the Germanic pagan festival of Yule.

In older Scandinavian society a popular prank was to place the Yule Goat in a neighbor's house without them noticing. The modern

version of the Yule Goat figure is a decorative goat made out of straw and bound with red ribbons, a popular Christmas ornament often found under the Yule tree. Large versions of this ornament are frequently erected in towns and cities around Christmas time – these goats tend to be illegally set on fire before Christmas. The Gävle goat was the first of these goats and remains the most famous.

The history of the Gävle Goat began in 1966. An advertising consultant, Stig Gavlén, came up with the idea of making a giant version of the traditional Swedish Yule Goat and placing it in the square. The goat has since had a history of being

burnt down roughly every other year, 2011 being the 25th time. Burning the goat can result in severe fines or even prison time for arson. However, during the 39 years of the Gävle Goat's history, only four people have been caught or convicted. The burning of the Gävle Goat is not officially welcomed by the citizens of Gävle. Security measures and the creativity of the arsonists have increased over time.

1996 was the first year that the Goat was under surveillance from web-cameras. In 2011, the fire department doused the straw with water to create a layer of ice in hopes of deterring arsonists. The 2011 Goat was set on fire a few days later.

In 2001, Lawrence Jones, a 51-year-old visitor from the US was caught for burning the goat. He spent 18 days in jail and was ordered to pay 100,000 Swedish kronor in damages. The Swedish court also confiscated Jones' lighter, making the argument that Jones clearly could not responsibly handle it. After Jones was released from jail he went straight back to the US without paying his fine.

In 2005, men dressed as Santa and the Gingerbread Man set the Goat on fire by shooting flaming arrows at it.

The inauguration of the 2012 Goat is due to take place on December 2.



Fifty Shades of Grey Christmas- The Legend of Krampus

According to legend, Krampus accompanies Saint Nicholas during the Christmas season, warning and punishing bad children, in contrast to St. Nicholas, who gives gifts to good children. When the Krampus finds a particularly naughty child, it stuffs the child in its sack and carries the fright-

ened child away to its lair, presumably to devour for its Christmas dinner.

The creature has roots in Germanic folklore. Traditionally young men dress up as the Krampus in Austria, southern Bavaria, South Tyrol, Hungary, Slovenia and Croatia during the first week of December, particularly on

the evening of 5 December, and roam the streets frightening children with rusty chains and bells.

Krampus is also portrayed with a bundle of twigs or a whip that he uses to occasionally swat children with.

Bah-humbug: Anti-Holiday Traditions

In 1966, Dan O'Keefe conceived "Festivus", a holiday to commemorate the season without participating in its pressures and commercialism. Though it had existed for decades, Festivus was pushed to the forefront of pop culture thanks to O'Keefe's son, Daniel. His son was a screenwriter for *Seinfeld* and the television show featured the holiday in an episode that aired in 1997.

Festivus begins with the "Airing of Grievances", which occurs during the Festivus meal and in which each person tells everyone else all the ways they have disappointed him or her over the past year. After the meal the "Feats of Strength" are performed, involving wrestling the head of the

household to the floor, with the holiday ending only if the head of the household is actually pinned.

The original holiday featured more peculiar practices, as detailed in the younger Daniel O'Keefe's book *The Real Festivus*. The book provides a third-person account of an early version of the Festivus holiday as celebrated by the O'Keefe family, and how O'Keefe amended or replaced details of his father's invention to create the *Seinfeld* episode. One example of this is the addition of the "Festivus Pole." During Festivus, the pole is displayed unadorned.

Celebrants of the holiday sometimes refer to it as "a Festivus for the rest of us",

a saying taken from the O'Keefe family traditions and popularized in the *Seinfeld* episode to describe Festivus' non-commercial aspect. It has also been described as a parody and as playful consumer resistance.

