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Newsletter of the Dutch Connection of Arizona

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THE REAL SAINT NICHOLAS

Saint Nicholas is the patron saint of just about everything. He is the national saint of Russia and Greece and churches named after him number in the thousands - more than 400 in Great Britain alone. He is the patron saint of judges, murderers, pawnbrokers, thieves, merchants, paupers, scholars, sailors, bakers, travelers, maidens and poor children. He is known as the friend and protector of all those in trouble.

Saint Nicholas was born in the Middle East about 350 miles northwest of Bethlehem in the fourth century. He grew up to become the bishop of Myra (now Kale), his hometown, Lycia, near the coast of what is now Turkey. Legends tell of his love for children, his kindness and the miracles he brought about.

Perhaps the most famous story of all tells how he helped three unfortunate young sisters who all had suitors but had no dowries because their father, a poor nobleman, could not raise the money. So they could not marry.

Now the bishop Nicholas was a shy man and did not like to give money directly, so he thought of a way to give it anonymously. When the first daughter was ready to marry, the good bishop tossed a bag of gold into the house at night. Later, when the second daughter prepared to marry, she too received a mysterious bag of gold. When the third daughter prepared to marry, the poor nobleman was determined to find out who had been so generous. So he kept watch and saw the bishop drop another bag of gold into the house.



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EDITOR'S CORNER

Dear Members and Friends:

The Board of Directors of the Dutch Connection wish one and all a Happy Thanksgiving, Joyous Christmas and a Happy New Year.



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Editor-in Chief
Hans Verhaagen

Advertising
David Page

Members are encouraged to submit articles of general interest with a Dutch-American flavor and newsworthy items concerning other members. Be sure to include your name, address and daytime telephone number. Submit material to the editor by e-mail: hans@dutchconnectionaz.org
Selected articles may be edited for clarity or space limitations at the sole discretion of the Editor. Submitted materials cannot be returned.

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Elected Officials for 2004

President: Drew de Weerd
drew@dutchconnectionaz.org

Vice-President: Marceline Vandewater
marceline@dutchconnectionaz.org

Secretary: Alliete van Beek
alliete@dutchconnectionaz.org

Treasurer: Johan Bolle
johan@dutchconnectionaz.org

Directors: David Page
david@dutchconnectionaz.org
Hans Verhaagen
hans@dutchconnectionaz.org

Honorary Consul of The Netherlands:
Siebe van der Zee 480-563-0092



Siebe K.J. van der Zee
Consul

Consulate of the Netherlands
7150 E. Camelback Rd.
Suite 444
Scottsdale, Arizona 85251

(480) 563-0092
FAX (480) 413-9782
E-Mail: ncphx@cox.net

The following events are planned on the dates and at the times indicated. While every effort is made to stay with this schedule, all dates may be subject to change.

In any case, mark your calendars.

For details to these events go to the web site www.dutchconnectionaz.org and click on the events tab.

November 16	Dutch-American Heritage Day
December 12	Sinterklaas
January 11, 2005	General Meeting and election of Officers. See page 4 for information

DON'T FORGET TO PAY YOU DUES

Because in the change over of the board of directors and the many hours of planning, invoices for annual dues will not be mailed out. In order to facilitate payment please mail your annual dues of \$15.00 by check payable to the Dutch Connection of Arizona to:

**Dutch Connection of Arizona
P.O. Box 15665, Scottsdale, AZ 85267**

THE REAL SAINT NICHOLAS *(Continued from page 1)*

It has been said that Saint Nicholas climbed on the roof and dropped the third bag of gold down the chimney where it landed in a stocking hung to dry, giving us a reason to hang up Christmas stockings today. When the father saw what had happened, Nicholas begged him to keep the secret, but, of course, the news got out. From then on, whenever anyone received an unexpected gift, they thanked Nicholas.

Six hundred years later, the Russian Emperor Vladimir visited Constantinople and heard all the wonderful stories about Bishop Nicholas and decided to make him the patron saint of Russia. The stories even spread to the Laplands - to the people of the reindeer sleds.

The three bags of gold Nicholas gave the sisters made him the focus of merchants in northern Italy. Statutes and pictures had shown him holding the three bags and when taken as the patron saint of the merchants, the bags became gold balls, representing money lenders and today, pawnbrokers.

The anniversary of Nicholas' death, December 6th, either 345 A.D. or 352 A.D., is so close to Christmas that, in many countries, the two merged. But in Germany and the Netherlands, the two remain separate.

SANTA DISCOVERS AMERICA

Europeans first brought Saint Nicholas to America in the fifteenth century. On his first voyage, Columbus named a port in Haiti for Saint Nicholas; and the Spaniards originally called Jackson, Florida, "Saint Nicholas Ferry". When the Dutch emigrated to America they took their beloved saint with them. At the prow of the ship in which they sailed to the New World in 1630 was a figure of Saint Nicholas. He wore a broad-brimmed hat and held a long -stemmed Dutch pipe. But at the same time the Reformation was fiercely dividing their homeland. A ban was placed on the celebration of Saint Nicholas Eve, forbidding passing out of cookies and cakes to children, a custom that had been as entrenched as our own trick-or-treating on Halloween. Saint Nicholas never regained his wide popularity and virtually disappeared as 17th century Dutch New Amsterdam was becoming 18th century English New York. With their arrival, the Dutch Sinterklaas did become forerunner for Santa Claus in the United States. German immigrants brought with them a positive attitude toward Christmas. They brought their custom of setting out hay in the barnyard for the Christchild's donkey on Christmas Eve and on Christmas Day finding the basket filled with snits (dried apple slices), choosets (candy), walnuts and gingerbread. As the Germans intermarried with the English, the dialect "Christ-kindle,; from the proper German Christkindlein, became "Kristkingle" or "Kriss-kingle." Eventually the "Kriss Kringle" replaced the Christchild figure entirely, a substitute akin to Santa Claus. By the latter half of the nineteenth century, Kriss Kringle was the most common Christmas bearer in Pennsylvania.

Pelznickel (Saint Nicholas in furs), another Old World German Christmas servant, was better known as "Belsnickel. He had been portrayed as someone out to have some fun by scaring children half to death, before changing character and giving them sweets. In more southern states of the America, Belsnickel was said to kidnap bad children and carry them away to who knows where.

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SANTA DISCOVERS AMERICA (Continued from page 3)

Children's imaginations called up fates worse than anything the adults might suggest. He rattles at windows with a horsewhip and wrapped around the wrist of the first child to reach for scattered candy without his permission. Gradually "Belsnickeling" became the custom of going from door to door collecting food and money for the poor and survived well into the present century.

Children in old Czechoslovakia believed Svaty Mikulas was let down from heaven on a golden cord by an angel. When he arrived on Christmas, children rushed to the table to say their prayers. If they did well, Svaty Mikulas told the angel to give the children presents.

JANUARY 11, 2005 GENERAL MEETING AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Yes, it is that time of the year again. We are looking for a few good men and women to serve on the Board of Directors in 2005. If you are interested, please call one of the officers and put your name in for nomination. The existance of the Dutch Connection of Arizona depends on you, our loyal members. Our general meeting will be, as established in the by-laws, on the second Tuesday in January, which is January 11, 2005. The location will be announced.

BE THERE!!!

THE HISTORY OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE

The tradition of having an evergreen tree become a symbol of Christmas goes back past recorded written history.

The Druids in ancient England and Gaul and the Romans in Europe both used evergreen branches to decorate their homes and public buildings to celebrate the Winter Solstice. Over the years, these traditions were adopted by Christians, who incorporated them as part of their Christmas holiday celebration.

Trees used specifically to celebrate Christmas are mentioned in the early 1600s in Germany and surrounding countries. The families would set up these trees in a prominent location of their home and decorate them with colored paper, small toys, food, and sometimes candles. As these people moved or immigrated to other countries, they brought this tradition with them.

Through the years many different things were used to decorate Christmas trees. As the world moved into the 1900s, many trees were decorated with strings of popcorn, homemade cards and pictures, cotton to look like snow, candy in all shapes and sizes, and occasionally, fancy store made glass balls and hand blown glass figurines. Candles were sometimes used, but often caused devastating fires, and many different types of candle holders were devised to try to prevent tree fires. Electric tree lights were first used just 3 years after Thomas Edison had his first mass public demonstration of electric lights back in 1879. The early Christmas tree lights were handmade and quite expensive.

Today, Christmas tree ornaments can be found in nearly every size, color, and shape imaginable, and they are used to decorate the millions of Christmas trees used throughout the world.





DUTCH-AMERICAN HERITAGE DAY 2004



On November 16th, Dutch-American Heritage Day, eight million Americans of Dutch descent celebrate their heritage and the contributions they and their ancestors have made to the economic, social, political, and cultural life of the United States.

The Dutch began their relations with America in 1609, when Captain Henry Hudson of the Dutch East India Company sailed up the present-day Hudson River looking for a shorter route to Asia. Although Hudson did not find his route, Dutch traders began to exploit the riches of this wild country and in 1614 established Fort Nassau (near Albany), the second European settlement in America. A few years later, the Dutch Governor Peter Minuit bought Manhattan Island for 60 guilders, the famous \$24 bargain.

A large portion of the eastern U.S., stretching from New Jersey and Delaware through New York and from Connecticut and Long Island to central eastern Pennsylvania, was settled by the Dutch in the early-1600s. The area was once known as New Netherland, and many places--Schuylkill, Catskill, Brooklyn, Staten Island, Harlem, Wall Street, Coney Island, to name but a few---trace their names from this Dutch period. Over the next two centuries, several waves of Dutch emigrants settled in the United States and, today, most Dutch-Americans are concentrated in ten states: New York, Michigan, California, Florida, Pennsylvania, Iowa, Texas, Washington, Ohio and Illinois.

Linked by traditions of intellectual and democratic freedom, the Netherlands became the first country in the world to recognize formal diplomatic relations with the United States in 1782. These relations have never been interrupted, and thus the Netherlands can boast the world's longest record of continuous friendly relations with the U.S. Benjamin Franklin once wrote: "In love of liberty and in the defense of it, Holland has been our example."

Relations between the two countries are lively and fruitful, as evidenced by the many occasions when

they came to each other's aid at crucial moments in history. In the American War of Independence, the American revolutionary cause found both sympathy in and support from the Netherlands. In 1779, John Paul Jones wrote: "The Dutch people are for us and for the war." In 1782, John Adams, the first U.S. envoy to the Netherlands, secured the first loan for Congress from three Amsterdam banks. Between 1780 and 1794 the Netherlands lent 30 million guilders to the U.S., a small amount by modern standards but at the time it equaled the entire foreign debt of the U.S. After the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, the Netherlands was one of the first countries to ally itself with the United States. The landings of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions in the occupied Netherlands, which began the liberation of the Netherlands in September 1944, are still celebrated today.

Many prominent Americans have been of Dutch origin including three presidents: Martin van Buren, Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

In November 1991 the U.S. Congress and President Bush proclaimed November 16 as Dutch-American Heritage Day. November 16th was selected because on that day in 1776 Dutch forces on the Caribbean island of St. Eustatius returned the salute of the American brig-of-war *Andrew Doria*, thereby making the Netherlands the first country to officially salute the flag of the newly-independent United States.

From the first salute in 1776 to the participation of the Netherlands alongside the U.S. in the recent Gulf War, the United States and the Netherlands have worked together for peace, freedom and commerce. The Netherlands-American partnership endures because of the close and natural ties between these two nations and these two peoples.

On Dutch-American Heritage Day we celebrate those ties and pay tribute to the mutual respect and friendship that animates the Dutch-American relationship.

AMSTERDAM BACKDROP OF MAJOR HOLLYWOOD FILM

The Dutch capital will serve as a backdrop and location for the new U.S. film 'Ocean's Twelve.' The American production crew is shooting scenes on a number of well known streets in the city's center, in particular around the Heiligeweg, near the Munt Toren.

The last major Hollywood film shot in and around Amsterdam was the 1971 James Bond movie 'Diamonds are Forever.' Amsterdam before and since has seen dozens of foreign film companies setting up scenes for their productions in its well known and lesser known locations. The city remains a favorite with Dutch movie producers as well.

In the past, Amsterdam scenes were used for such foreign films as *The Silver Skates*, *The Amsterdam Kill*, and a number of Italian and Hong Kong movies.

'Ocean's Twelve', with actors George Clooney and Matt Damon, is the follow-up of the successful 'Ocean's Eleven', itself a remake. In the new film's plot, criminals are trying to steal a valuable, original document of the V.O.C., the Dutch East India Company.

THE NETHERLANDS CITED BY AARP AS LEADER IN QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THE ELDERLY

AARP has named the Netherlands the leader in providing a high quality-of-life for its older citizens. This news, among other findings, was derived from an exclusive survey of 16 industrialized nations on key issues such as: health care, benefits, pension coverage, taxes and social programs. Through this survey, AARP The Magazine hopes to shed light on the benefits retirees enjoy elsewhere in the world as a reference point for America's own policies.

Recently the AARP and The Embassy of the Netherlands celebrated the publication in AARP The Magazine of "As Good As It Gets: The Netherlands Rates Tops in a Survey of 16 Nations".

Among the highlights of the survey:

On universal health care: Drug, hospital and physicians' services are 30-50% more expensive in the U.S., where 45 million Americans (41%) have no health insurance at all (though most seniors have Medicare).

In the Netherlands, co-payments for expensive procedures are small or even nonexistent. Furthermore, the government limits the amount a hospital may bill an insurance company.

In the Netherlands, home visits from doctors are subsidized by the government, which keep their seniors away from nursing homes for as long as possible.

On overall unemployment rate: At 3.8%, the Netherlands averaged the lowest unemployment rate. Spain had the highest at 11.3%; the U.S. had 6%.

On total tax burden: The personal income tax rate in the Netherlands isn't Europe's highest, but it's high -- 52% on any income over \$60,000. That's 20% higher than the U.S. rate. However, polls show that a majority of Dutch citizens don't object to large salary deductions if it protects them from poverty later in life.

The article "As Good As It Gets" is available at www.aarpmagazine.org

NEDERLANDER 'MEEST TOLERANTE EUROPEAAN GENOEMD

Nederlanders zijn de meest tolerante inwoners van Europa. Dat blijkt uit een enquête waarvan Reader's Digest de resultaten onlangs publiceerde. Een op de vijf Europeanen beoordeelde de Nederlanders als het meest verdraagzame volk.

De ondervraagden vinden Duitsers onfatsoenlijk, loven Britten om hun humor en Italianen om hun charmes. Europeanen zijn dol op Italië en hebben een hekel aan Duitsland. Italianen werden gekozen als het leukste volk met de beste keuken.

Een op vijf Europeanen en een op de drie Nederlanders kiest Duitsers als het minst leuke volk. Bijna de helft van de Nederlandse ondervraagden ergert zich aan het onbeschaamde gedrag en de slechte manieren van de oosterburen.

Als Nederlanders van nationaliteit mogen veranderen, kiezen de meesten ervoor om als Belg door het leven te gaan. Argumenten daarvoor zijn de taal, leefomgeving en leefstijl van de zuiderburen. Als Nederlanders voor de keuze worden gesteld, gaan ze het liefst in Spanje wonen.

AMERIKAANSE VERKIEZINGEN EUROPESE PERS EVEN VERDEELD ALS AMERIKAANS ELECTORAAT

De Europese pers is al even verdeeld over de herverkiezing van de Amerikaanse president Bush als het electoraat in de Verenigde Staten. De reacties in de redactionele commentaren van donderdag lopen uiteen van vreugde tot diepe afschuw.

Boulevardblad The Sun is blij met de overwinning van Bush. De Amerikanen hebben de juiste man gekozen voor deze gevaarlijke tijden, meent het rechtse tabloid. Bush' herverkiezing is volgens The Sun "slecht nieuws voor terroristen over de hele wereld".

Ook The Daily Telegraph is positief over de uitslag. De Amerikaanse kiezers hebben volgens de krant aangetoond dat zij zich niet laten intimideren door al-Qaeda en andere terroristen.

AMERIKAANSE VERKIEZINGEN

De linkse krant The Independent is minder enthousiast. Het dagblad brengt op zijn voorpagina een fotocollage over onder meer de oorlog in Irak en de mishandelingen in de Abu Ghraib-gevangenis. In het midden staat de openingskop: "Four more years". In zijn commentaar stelt The Independent: "Amerika heeft gekozen voor Bush en de wereld moet leven met de gevolgen".

The Daily Mirror kiest voor een nog bottere benadering. Boven een foto van Bush kopt de sensatiekrant: "Hoe konden 59.017.382 mensen zó dom zijn? "

De conservatieve Franse krant Le Figaro stelt dat Bush na zijn herkiezing nu nog vaster in het zadel zit dan vier jaar geleden. "Zijn enige streven is om zichzelf in de geschiedenisboeken te krijgen", meent de krant. Le Figaro waarschuwt voor problemen tussen Europa en de VS. "In plaats van ontspanning moeten wij rekening houden met een nog hardere opstelling van de VS", schrijft Le Figaro.

De Franse krant Le Monde hekelt in een commentaar het verouderde kiessysteem. De krant stelde dat de kiezers in Ohio bepaalden wie president van het machtigste land ter wereld zou worden. De Italiaanse krant La Repubblica stelt in zijn commentaar dat Bush eindelijk volwassen is geworden. "Niemand kan hem nog iets maken. Hij heeft eindelijk zijn vader overtroffen", aldus het Romeinse dagblad. Door de herkiezing heeft Bush ook meer politiek gezag, meent La Repubblica. "Amerika is niet meer in bruikleen aan Bush gegeven, Bush bezit Amerika." De Russische krant Gazeta steunt Bush. Het blad schrijft in zijn commentaar: " De meerderheid van de Amerikanen heeft te kennen gegeven dat de oorlog en Irak en Afghanistan goede keuzes waren. Beslissend was voor deze mensen dat ze in oorlogstijd een sterk staatshoofd willen, geen intellectuele aristocraat uit Boston", aldus het Moskouse dagblad.

"De Verenigde Staten bestaan eigenlijk uit twee landen. De diep-religieuze, patriottistische mensen op het platteland en de liberale, ontkerkelijkte .

AMERIKAANSE VERKIEZINGEN

stadsbevolking", schrijft hoofdredacteur Yves Desmet in het Belgische dagblad De Morgen. Over de toekomst blijft de hoofdredacteur in het ongewisse. "Er is nu een sprankeltje hoop dat Bush zich gaat richten op zijn plek in de boeken, in plaats van een herverkiezing", aldus Desmet.

De Duitse krant Die Welt stelt dat Bush met zijn zege de smaad van vier jaar gelden heeft uitgewist, toen hij zich pas na lang juridisch touwtrekken president van de Verenigde Staten mocht noemen. Bovendien haalde hij toen in totaal minder stemmen binnen dan zijn tegenstander Al Gore. Die Welt vreest dat de Republikeinen denken dat ze na hun zege een extreme koers kunnen gaan varen.

Ook het Spaanse dagblad El País schrijft dat Bush de duidelijke winnaar is. Volgens de krant heeft de Texaan de overwinning te danken aan de sterke en effectieve Republikeinse verkiezingscampagne. Zijn partij schoof Bush naar voren als een oorlogspresident tegen terrorisme en maakte van Kerry een karikatuur door hem neer te zetten als een opportunist, aldus El País.

SINTERKLAAS LIEDJES

On the following page is a selection of "Sinterklaas Liedjes."
For those of you who were born in the Netherlands, it will back memories. For our English speaking friends, I say: "give it a try."

Anyway, this gives you a chance to practice for our upcoming "Sinterklaas Feest" on December 12.



Songs to sing for Sinterklaas



"Sinterklaas kapoentje,
gooi wat in mijn schoentje,
gooi wat in mijn laarsje,
dank u, Sinterklaasje."

"Sinterklaasje bonne, bonne, bonne, bonne,
gooi wat in mijn regen-, regentonne,
gooi wat in mijn laarsje,
dank u, Sinterklaasje."

"Zie, de maan schijnt door de bomen,
makkers staakt uw wild geraas.
't Heerlijk avondje is gekomen,
't avondje van Sinterklaas.
Vol verwachting klopt on hart,
wie de koek krijgt, wie de gard.
Vol verwachting klopt on hart,
wie de koek krijgt, wie de gard."

"Zie ginds komt de stoomboot
uit Spanje weer aan.
Hij brengt on Sint-Nicolaas,
ik zie hem al staan.
Hoe huppelt zijn paardje
het dek op en neer,
hoe waaien de wimpels
al heen en al weer."

"Hoor de wind waait door de bomen,
hier in huis daar waait de wind.
Zou de goede Sint wel komen,
nu hij het weer zo lelijk vindt?
Nu hij het weer zo lelijk vindt.
Als hij komt in donkere nachten,
op zijn paardje o zo snel,
als hij wist hoe zeer wij wachten,
ja gewis dan kwam hij wel,
ja gewis dan kwam hij wel."

"O, kom er eens kijken,
wat ik in mijn schoentje vind.
Alles gekregen van die beste Sint.
Een pop met vlechtjes in het haar,
een snoezig jurkje kant en klaar,
drie kaatseballen in een net
en een letter van banket.
O, kom er eens kijken,
wat ik in mijn schoentje vind.
Alles gekregen van die beste Sint."

"Sinterklaasje, kom maar binnen met je knecht,
want we zitten allemaal even recht.
Misschien heeft u wel even tijd,
voordat u weer naar Spanje rijdt.
Sinterklaasje kom maar even bij ons aan,
en laat uw paardje maar buiten staan.
En we zingen en we springen en we zijn zo blij,
want er zijn geen stoute kinderen bij.
En we zingen en we springen en we zijn zo blij,
want er zijn geen stoute kinderen bij."

"Sinterklaas is jarig,
ik zet mijn schoentje klaar.
'licht dat hij het vol doet,
met - ja, wist ik het maar.
Hier zet ik wat water,
daar wat hooi voor het paard,
want dat trouwe bestje,
is dat heus wel waard."