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A publication for the members of the Santa Clara County Optometric Society

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT SANDRA BOZICH, O.D.

Holiday Greetings

I have always been curious about other religions and the customs associated with each. I wonder if you have too. In honor of the diversity we so enjoy here in the Bay Area, I thought I'd share a little about a few of the celebrations that occur at this time of year.

Kwanzaa is an African American and Pan-African holiday that celebrates family, community and culture. Celebrated from 26 December thru 1 January, its origins are in the first harvest celebrations of Africa from which it takes its name. The name Kwanzaa is derived from the phrase "matunda ya kwanza" which means "first fruits" in Swahili, a Pan-African language which is the most widely spoken African language.

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim calendar. It is during this month that Muslims observe the Fast of Ramadan. Lasting for the entire month, Muslims fast during the daylight hours and in the evening eat small meals and visit with friends and family. It is a time of worship and contemplation. A time to strengthen family and community ties

Hanukkah is celebrated for eight days and nights, starting on the 25th of Kislev on the Hebrew calendar (which is November-December on the Gregorian calendar). In Hebrew, the word "Hanukkah" means "dedication." The holiday commemorates the rededication of the holy Temple in Jerusalem after the Jews' 165 B.C.E. victory over the Hellenist Syrians. Antiochus, the Greek King of Syria, outlawed Jewish rituals and ordered the Jews to worship Greek gods.

The Winter Solstice is a Minor High Day in Druidism, usually occurring around December 21st or so of the civil calendar. Also known as Yule and Midwinter, this is a day sacred to Sun, Thunder, and Fire Deities. Large fires were built outdoors and Yule Logs lit indoors, in order to rekindle the dying Sun and help it to return brightly to the Northern skies. Burnt logs and ashes from the Midwinter fires were kept as a talisman against lightning and house fires. It was also a custom in many parts of Paleopagan Europe to decorate live evergreen trees in honor of the Gods (cutting down a tree to bring indoors is a blasphemous desecration of the original concept). This is considered, along with Midsummer, the best day of the year to cut mistletoe.

Christmas. Despite the beliefs about Christ that the birth stories expressed, the church did not observe a festival for the celebration of the event until the 4th century. The date was chosen to counter the pagan festivities connected with the winter solstice; since 274, under the emperor Aurelian, Rome had celebrated the feast of the "Invincible Sun" [or Saturnalia] on December 25. (Christmas, The 1995 Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia) Though the substitution of Christmas for the pagan festival cannot be proved with certainty, it remains the most plausible explanation for the dating of Christmas. (The Catholic Encyclopedia, p.656, vol. 3, 1967.)

Whatever you choose to celebrate, do celebrate!!! Have a wonderful holiday, be safe, and share your love with others.

Peace.

Sandy



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How to submit articles and post-ings for the FOCUS: email them to the Focus Editor by the end of the month for publication in the following issue of the Focus: myeyedoctor@gmail.com

How to change your delivery address: mail changes to Jim Heitzig (1585 The Alameda #100, San Jose, CA 95126)

Visit us on the web: www.sccos.org.

The Holiday Party

The annual SCCOS Holiday party convened at California Café in Los Gatos, where a lively bunch of Optometrists, guests and reps (72 in all) came to fellowship with appetizers, cocktails, and dinner with wine. But that was not all. Door prizes over \$1000 in retail value were raffled off in a lively, narrated fashion. Our narrator was Rodney Lum, O.D. and our lovely "Vanna's" who walked around displaying the items to be won, were none other than Dr. Saul Levine and Dr. Ken Schwaderer. Don't worry Dr. Levine. The carousel picture frame that you broke has been exchanged and will be up for raffle again next year! Dr. Matteson and Most and their 5 guests won the most number of prizes. In fact they might have all won prizes.

Then there was dancing for those who bothered to stick around. By then, the Amaryllis Police (that would be Dr. Linda Hur) had gone home, so she could no longer stop all the amaryllis from being taken from the restaurant.

Before the festivities concluded, presentations for the Young OD of the Year and OD of the Year were announced! Congratulations to Rischel Yeh and Brent Chinn respectively.

We owe a big thank you to our sponsors and reps. Without them, the evening accouterments most certainly would not have been possible. Our sponsors are: Gold Level: Alcon, Essilor, Vistakon; Silver Level: Con-Cise, Hoya, Optos, Transitions, Websystems2; Bronze: CSC Laboratory, Maui Jim, Safilo. Other companies that donated generously to raffle prizes and entertainment included AMO, Revolution, Skaga and VWI.

Be on the look out for the time, date and place of next year's Holiday Party. You won't want to miss it: The Oscars of Optometry. -Linda Hur



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