

THE NEW COURIER

Nº1 December 2003

Institut d'Estudis Nord-Americans

Monthly Publication

Christmas Traditions

Why do we send Christmas cards?



Who has never bought, written and sent Christmas cards when the month of December arrives?

Many place the origin of this custom in England around 1840, when a new law was established reducing the cost of mailing cards. Before that time, few people could afford to pay a private messenger. A legend says that it was Henry Cole who began the tradition. In 1843, he began his annual ritual of writing Christmas notes to his friends. By 1860 it was very popular in England to send Christmas greetings. In 1865, in Boston, Louis Prang printed and sold the first Christmas cards in the United States. The designs and messages haven't changed much over the years -- most with wishes for a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. While e-cards are fun, don't let new technology take over. Sending and receiving an original card by snail mail will always make you happy. Don't forget! Send some of each type this year!

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New IEN registration campaign

Soon, the IEN will be starting a big advertising campaign for the opening of January 2004 registration. The creativity of the campaign, which will continue with the slogan **"Do you speak English?"** wants to draw attention to the fact that you shouldn't hide when people speak English to you. Don't hide, speak! Its distribution will focus on having poster ads that get noticed in the main subway and FGC stations, in

Barcelona and the nearby towns. You'll be seeing it soon.

As is traditional, the IEN will also have a mailing campaign to the students, wishing them happy holidays, and at the same time, announcing the upcoming registration dates which will be from the 16th to the 23rd of December 2003 and from the 7th to the 15th of January 2004.



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MERRY CHRISTMAS
&
HAPPY NEW YEAR



Academic Information

Looking ahead to the Winter 2004 Trimester...

Don't forget to register for your next course!!

REGISTRATION - Here are the dates you need remember:

Winter 2004 Registration

From December 16 to December 23 and from January 7 to January 15

Registration Office schedule

From 10 to 14:30 and from 15:30 to 20:30 Monday to Friday

Remember you can both register and pay for your course by calling 93 240 28 50. You can use your debit or credit card or if you prefer, direct with drawal from your bank Account.

NEW COURSE! Speaking Proficiently

If you feel your grammar is proficient, but want to maintain you level or work on expanding your vocabulary, improve your intonation and pronunciation, the try our speaking Proficiency Course.

This course does not use a book, but uses authentic material in videos, cassettes, and reading. The emphasis is placed on speaking and listening with a variety of topics ranging from movies, news, popular TV shows to general topics of social interest.

Schedule: 30 hour course. See hours on the schedule bulletin board during registration.

EDITORIAL

The New Courier



The IEN has been publishing the Courier at the beginning of each month for over two years now. Its objective is to inform and update the Institute's students, members and staff of the activities - cultural as well as academic - which will take place during the month, as well as to review the previous month's events. It also includes interviews of prominent teachers and students as well as information related to American cultural issues or customs. In this year's October issue we went to full color printing. - This December issue we are changing it again to a newspaper broadsheet format. This is THE NEW COURIER

The New Courier is one more of the many visual and practical changes you have been seeing lately

at the Institute - improvements like those to the front entrance and the main lobby, the new air conditioning units and furniture in the classrooms and most recently the remodeling of the art gallery/class registration area.

As President of the IEN I am most happy to welcome this first issue of the NEW COURIER and I encourage all of you to participate by contributing articles, photographs and experiences related to the Institute in order to keep developing it as a meaningful and lively communication tool amongst our IEN Community.

Finally I would like to wish you all, my best wishes for the New Year 2004.

Robert M. Manson
President

FILM CLUB

American Independents Cycle



This month we will show "Memento"
Best picture in the 2002 Independent Spirit Awards

How is this for a scenario? A man breaks into your house in the middle of the night. He kills your wife and leaves you with brain injuries. Furious, you pledge your life to track down and kill whoever is responsible. There is just one problem: after the head injury, you are no longer capable of creating new memories; everything before the accident is crystal clear, but now you cannot remember anything past several minutes.

Now chew o this: what happens to guilt if you cannot remember what you did? How can a person have emotions if he does not know where they came from? How can we learn from our experiences if we cannot remember them. What is the purpose of revenge if someone cannot recollect or prosper from it?

"Memento" wins the 2002 Independent Spirit Awards best picture prize for inducing the most audience participation. Not only is the film thought-provoking and unusually absorbing, but it also places us in the main character's shoes. How can we be in the same mental status with the main character when he cannot remember anything? Writer/director Christopher

Nolan has that answer: he tells the story backwards. We begin at the end and work our way towards the beginning. However, each individual scene plays running forward, often overlapping, providing us with clear, constructive transitions. The main character, Leonard, is confused in prospects of time and experience, and so are we.

In a movie like this, it would be almost impossible to make without leaving some information out; even some of the film's actors were confused and requested a script told in sequence order. But these filmmakers have constructed a movie with a plot hole big enough to drive a semi through: If Leonard cannot remember anything after the accident, then how can he remember that he remember the he has a memory condition?

"Memento" is still a unique mystery thriller. It is a tantalizing experience we do not often come across at the movies. For audiences who like to sit back and relax, this film is a waste of time. It requires us to follow along, participate, fit puzzle pieces together - "Memento" doesn't provide any easy or obvious answers, is one of the last years most challenging movies, not to be missed if you are looking for something clever and original.

Free! Wednesday December 3rd at 7:00 PM, IEN Theater

Jubilee Jazz Club

presents, in December, a musical jewel "Cabin in the Sky" by Vincente Minnelli

It was one of the first feature films with an all-black cast that was produced in Hollywood by MGM that was outside the exhibition circuits exclusively targeted for black audiences. The same year, another

major producer, 20th Century Fox, launched a movie with similar characteristics titled, "Stormy Weather". Both of these films presented, in a country and naive sort of way, what could paradoxically be called



"the American Negro lifestyle", with the common denominator being the star: actress and singer Lena Horne.

The idea for "Cabin in the Sky" arose at the end of the 30's, when composer Lorenz Hart's brother recommended that Broadway producer Albert Lewis acquire the copyrights on a story called "Little Joe" written by Hollywood writer Lynn Root, to turn it into a musical fantasy. The show opened in New York on October 25, 1940, and was presented a total of 156 times.

Soon, producer Arthur Freed decided to adapt this fable for film and "Cabin in the Sky" became the first "all-black" Broadway musical that was brought to the screen, despite reticence on the part of white studio executives at the time and of the black community. The managers chose Vincente Minnelli as the director, and he thus made his first film after a prestigious Broadway career as director and choreographer. The shooting was extended from August 31 to October 28, 1942, in the midst of high tension between the two female stars, veteran singer Ethel Waters and the younger Lena Horne. After it opened on April 9th of the following year, the critiques were favorable and unanimous.

Free! Thursday December 11th at 8:00 PM, IEN Conference Room

AMERICAN HOLIDAYS

The diversity of Christmas in the United States

"From a picnic on the beach at Waikiki or Key West to candles in a window during the twilight of a cold day in Alaska"



The first Christmas observance in what is now the United States was celebrated in an authentic Spanish style. Hernando de Soto and his army set up their winter camp in the present day city of Tallahassee, Florida in 1539. Since that time, the holiday traditions of nearly every nation on earth have moved into, around, and across the U.S. Every ethnic group has its place in our society, and they bring their own traditions for December celebrations. In addition, the diversity in the American climate helps to set the stage for various types of festivities ranging from a picnic on the beach at Waikiki or Key West to candles in a window during the twilight of a cold day in Alaska.

"For most people, turkey is the main dish and presents are found under a Christmas tree"

For most people, turkey is the main dish and presents are found under a Christmas tree. Families gather together and the gifts come from Santa Claus. These are the basics and the varied pleasures take off from there in all directions. In New York City, holiday shoppers stop to watch skaters on the ice beneath the tree at Rockefeller Center while others gaze in awe at the magnificent Neapolitan Baroque figures on the Angel Tree at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In Texas, you can join a Tex-Mex "posada" in San Antonio or travel 70 miles north to Fredericksburg for a German-style Christmas Market. The South has a long Christmas tradition going back to

the first English Christmas at Jamestown. Today in New Orleans, thousands of carolers gather each year in Jackson Square for a huge community sing while bonfires are lit all along the Mississippi River.

"In Washington, DC, a large tree represents the nation with smaller trees representing each state"

In Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry, an enchanted forest of 43 international trees and three crèches decorated by the city's cultural community groups is on display through January 7. Appropriate ethnic food is served in the cafeteria and various ethnic groups present folk dances and story hours throughout the season. In Washington, DC, the focal point of the season is the lighting of the tree on the Ellipse. A large tree represents the nation with smaller trees representing each state. While the Kennedy Center presents a wide-variety of Christmas programs, the hottest ticket in town is for the "Messiah" sing-in at the concert hall. Boston is also famous for its annual Christmas presentation of "Messiah" by the Handel-Haydn Society as well as the caroling festivities on Beacon Hill. The "Nation's Christmas Tree" in California's Kings Canyon National Park is the site of a special annual celebration. Carolers sing at the base of the 267-foot sequoia each year and the size of the group depends on the depth of the heavy snows in the park.

"Carolers sing at the base of the 267-foot sequoia each year"

Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, founded by Moravian missionaries on Christmas Eve, 1741 starts off the season with a huge Christmas Market. The Holiday decorations in most buildings in the city consist of a single candle in each window. A giant lighted star can be seen atop South Mountain and is visible for twenty miles. St. Augustine, Florida, the oldest city in the U.S., has the entire historic area draped in white lights. There is a city ordinance which prevents anyone from displaying outdoor Christmas lights that are not white. The one exception is a colorfully decorated tree in the town square that is set up under the white lights hung in ancient Live Oak trees.

"A giant lighted star can be seen atop South Mountain and is visible for twenty miles"

Thousands flock to Hollywood, California for the annual Parade of the Stars while others converge on Balboa Park in San Diego for Christmas concerts on the world's largest outdoor pipe organ. In Salt Lake City, the great classical music of Christmas is presented by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir while a small choir in St. Joseph's Church in Washington, New Jersey sings "Silent night" while bathed in the light of an antique stained glass window depicting the nativity, proving that there is more than one way to "make a joyful noise unto the Lord"

CHRISTMAS RECIPES

Holiday Goose

1 wild goose
Tart apples, peeled, cored, sliced
1 onion
Celery tops
3 tbsp. butter
1tbsp. paprika
1tsp. salt
1 1/4 tsp. pepper
1/8 tsp. thyme
1/8 tsp. parsley
1pt. dry red wine

Clean goose well. Wipe with salt and pepper. Fill cavity with raw tart apples, onion, and celery tops. Sew. Place in foil and add melted butter, paprika, salt, pepper, thyme, parsley, and wine. Completely cover with foil. Roast at 350 degrees; baste often. When done, remove foil from top and brown. Remove stuffing and serve.

Christmas Sugar Cookies

1 1/3 c butter
1 c sugar
1 tsp. grated orange peel
1tsp. vanilla
2 eggs
8 tsp. milk
4 c sifted flour
3 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. salt

Cream shortening, sugar, orange peel & vanilla add egg & beat til light & fluffy; stir in milk sift together dry ingredients & blend in cream mixture. Divide dough in half, chill one hour. Roll out, (not too thin) use cookie cutters. 8-10 minutes in oven. 375 degree. Yield: 6 dozen

Party Egg Nog

3 quarts whole milk
2-cups sugar
10 eggs
3 tsp. vanilla
1/4 kilo whipped cream
Fresh nutmeg
Rum and/or bourbon, to taste

Carefully and thoroughly wash and dry the eggs. Then, carefully crack the eggs, putting the yolks into a large bowl and the whites into a medium-sized bowl. Be sure no eggshell falls into the bowls. To be safe, crack each egg into a small glass first and then add to the appropriate bowl. In the large bowl, add 1/2 cup of rum or bourbon (or both) to the egg yolks. Then add the sugar and cream them together. Cover the bowl and leave this mixture in the refrigerator over night (or at least 3 hours). Also cover the bowl of egg whites and leave them in the refrigerator. The following day, add the milk and vanilla to the egg yolk mixture and mix with an electric mixer. Then with an electric mixer or metal whisk, beat the egg whites in the other bowl until they are fairly stiff (not very stiff). Then gently fold the beaten egg whites into the milk and egg yolk mixture. Continue to blend with a whisk or wooden spoon until the consistency is smooth. Fold in the whipped cream and mix in the same manner. Add additional rum and/or bourbon to taste, usually at least one cup. Cover the bowl and keep it in the refrigerator until you are ready to serve it. Serve the egg nog in large wine glasses or glass punch cups. Grate fresh nutmeg on top of each filled glass. It makes 20-30 servings.

December Activities

FILM CLUB "Memento"

Directed by
Christopher Nolan

Wednesday 3rd
7:00 PM

Theater

JUBILEE JAZZ CLUB

Film
"Cabin in the Sky"

Directed by
Vincente Minnelli

Thursday 11th
7:00 PM

Conference Room

HAVE A DRINK ON THE IEN!

You are invited!

On the last day of class, the IEN invites you to celebrate the end of the trimester and get into the Christmas spirit by enjoying a free holiday drink in the SPEAK EASY BAR! Classic Christmas stories and carols will be available to read and sing with your classmates and teachers (Scrooges need not apply!) HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!

MONTHLY REGULAR EVENTS

Twice a month at 7:00 PM
FILM CLUB in the IEN Theater.
American Independents

Every other Thursday at 8:00 PM
JUBILEE JAZZ CLUB Concerts
and lectures.

Once a month at 10:30 PM
BASIC DINNER
(for Basic 1 through
Pre-Intermediate 2)

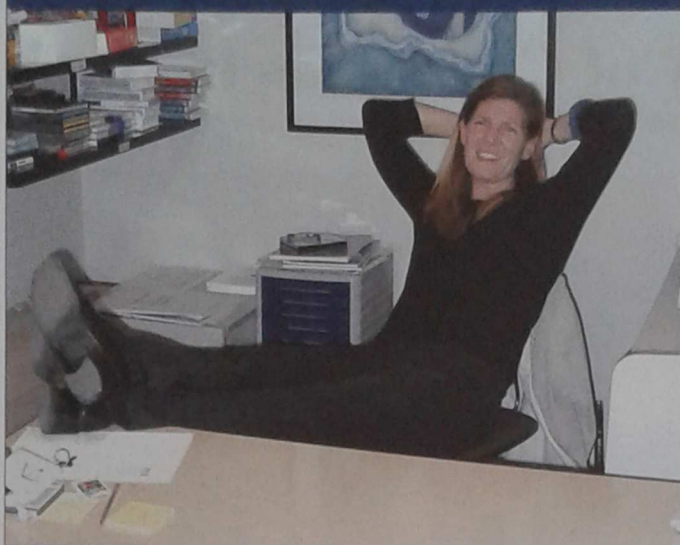
DINNER IN ENGLISH

(all other levels)

Practice your English in a natural setting while you eat, drink, and socialize with IEN teachers and fellow students! Tickets are available at reception desk (approximately 20.00€).

TEACHER'S HUMAN PROFILE

This month we've talked with Mary Meisenholder



Where were you born?

I was born in Southern California.

What was it like growing up in California? What was California like and how has it changed?

California was and still is a great place to grow up, in spite of the fires and earthquakes. You have everything in "the land of fruits and nuts". There is a laid-back lifestyle that exists there that makes childhood uncomplicated and adulthood fun. Of course there are problems with over population, traffic, crime and general frustrations, but you learn to deal with it. Yes we get made fun of for having Schwarzenegger as our governor, but Regan was governor then the rest of the country voted for him as president, twice! California is different today in many ways, but it still has a strong democratic (hippie) influence, which makes it a unique place to grow up.

Why did you decide to leave the US and move to Barcelona?

Really I did not decide to leave the US to come to Barcelona. I came from Buenos Aires, Argentina. I married an Argentine and lived there for 3 years and because of the economic and political upheaval we decided to come to Spain. Everyone always asks why not the US, but we had met in Europe and we both have always really liked Spain.

Have you always been a teacher?

No I haven't. I studied Art History and had worked in an art museum and taught some Art History courses as a graduate assistant.

During my studies I had to study French and this is how my interest began in language teaching and linguistics.

What do you like best and least about Barcelona?

What I like best about Barcelona is the easy access to the mountains and the beaches. It really is a great city to live in. It's a great beach city with wonderful public transportation and it is not full of skyscrapers to block out the sun nor are the streets full of men dressed in suits in a hurry to go somewhere. The thing I like least about Barcelona is really a problem with me. I am not used to the diagonal system of the city design and I can never seem to end up on the street I want or I end up taking a really long way around.

What about your hobbies and interest?

My hobbies are most sports. I really like watching live sporting events and playing sports, even though I am not very good at them and quite accident prone. One thing I don't do much any more, but find terribly fun is going to art school exhibitions. The students in the art schools are very creative and I find have less limitations than well known artists. I think you will find some of the most creative and cutting edge work in this type of setting.

Past Events

Indians of New Mexico and Arizona

Cycle of illustrated lectures with slides and films

Edward K. Flagler at the lecture he gave on November 4th: "Los Indios Pueblo; una cultura milenaria".



Dinner in English

Students from the Adult Program also practice English outside the classroom with IEN teachers at our Dinner in English.

The level you have is not important at the dinner. It's the interest you have in learning that counts! If your level is from Basic 1 through Pre-Intermediate 2, we hope to see you at the Basic Dinner. We'll see the other levels at the Dinner in English.

The November Dinner in English was held in the restaurant FRESCO, there was lots of English and fun!

