



Who is "Santa Claus"?

by Mark Brooks

Santa Claus, also known as Saint Nicholas, Father Christmas, Kris Kringle, or simply "Santa", is the figure who, in most of Western cultures, is described as bringing gifts on Christmas Eve, December 24 or on his Feast Day, December 6. The legend may have part of its basis in hagiographical tales concerning the historical figure of Saint Nicholas.

The modern depiction of Santa Claus as a fat, jolly man (or gnome) wearing a red coat and trousers with white cuffs and collar, and black leather belt and boots, became popular in the United States in the 19th century due to the significant influence of caricaturist and political cartoonist Thomas Nast. This image has been maintained and reinforced through song, radio, television, and films. In the United Kingdom and Europe, his depiction is often identical to the American Santa, but he is commonly called Father Christmas.



One legend associated with Santa says that he lives in the far north, in a land of perpetual snow. The American version of Santa Claus lives at the North Pole, while Father Christmas is said to reside in Lapland. Other details include: that he is married and lives with Mrs. Claus; that he makes a list of children throughout the world, categorizing them according to their behavior; that he delivers presents, including toys, candy, and other presents to all of the good boys and girls in the world, and sometimes coal or sticks to the naughty children, in one night; and that he accomplishes this feat with the aid of

magical elves who make the toys, and eight or nine flying reindeer who pull his sleigh.

There has long been opposition to teaching children to believe in Santa Claus. Some Christians say the Santa tradition detracts from the religious origins and purpose of Christmas. Other critics feel that Santa Claus is an elaborate lie, and that it is unethical for parents to teach their children to believe in his existence. Still others oppose Santa Claus as a symbol of the commercialization of the Christmas holiday, or as an intrusion upon their own national traditions. (Wikipedia.org)

A Heartwarming Joke...

by Jeanne George

A woman's husband had been slipping in and out of a coma for several months, yet she had stayed by his bedside every single day. One day, when he came to, he motioned for her to come nearer. As she sat by him, he whispered, eyes full of tears, "You know what? You have been with me all through the bad times. When I got fired, you were there to support me. When my business failed, you were there. When I was shot, you were by my side. When we lost the house, you stayed right here. When my health started failing, you were still by my side; you know what?" "What, dear?" she gently asked, smiling as her heart began to fill with warmth. "You're bad luck! Get the hell away from me!"

Robins' Nest

by Robin George

Well here we are...the end of the year. The best car club in Northern California has (if you don't mind me saying) proved itself again. We were able to get out into the community through exhibits, car shows, charities, and just plain showing off. Thank you the members, for inspiring the Board to try different ideas and strange events throughout the year. We also had our usual events which are tried and true. Those will continue next year as you love doing them. But the upcoming year promises to bring more of the same as well as the different.

Elections are scheduled during Decembers General Meeting.

What can I say? It's your club and it's your vote that will send a signal on how you want the club to go. The current board is willing to continue as your representatives for another year if you so desire. But if you want to go in a different direction or you're tired of my nonsense then by all means step forward. I'm sure the Board would welcome some new faces. SO STEP UP !!! The president is only as good as his supporting cast. I and the club have been extremely fortunate to have a supporting cast that enjoys doing what it has been doing. We have worked well together and sometimes the board meetings seem a little crazy but we are able to reach that all important consensus. I thank them for their support. I also thank the club for their support these past years. This club is fun and we plan to keep it that way.

Reminder: Please attend the General Business Meeting on December 11th. Be early!!!!



Treasure Trove

by Jeanne George

WELCOME to these new members who joined during November

Michael and Kristen Gingrich
Laura Beeman
Byron and Susan Yerzy
Vlad and Angela Pokadko

Memberships Expiring December 1

Fall, William & Elanora Drake
Lockhart, Doug
Myers, Cece

Memberships renewed in November

Black, Cat and Ken Johnson
Correia, Denise
Brooks, Mark
Jurach, Tom and Anne

This month our Media man, Ron Petrich added a feature to the web page which allows for interested people to join SAMOA electronically. Already we have gained 3 new memberships with 5 new members. Ron is always looking to improve the information provided on the web site and is working hard on new changes for 2009.

We now have 117 memberships consisting of 191 members with 126 Miata's

A
Christmas
Tree to behold
Is a story to be told
Bulbs, trim and light
For all a bright delight
The fresh evergreen smell
For others a bright ringing bell
A heavenly angel perched on top
With great care placed there by Pop
From Christmas last: A year has past
As friends gather to meet, and family to eat
Count your blessings, health, happiness & smiles
SAMOA greetings to Miata friends across the miles
From
Your
BOO

October Birthdays

by Ron Petrich

Happy December SAMOA birthdays to...

Margaret Counter 12/15
Clay Cowan 12/06
Phil Csik 12/07
Jackie McClure 12/02
Cindy McGuire 12/24
Gary Nield 12/20
Bonni Parker 12/21
Kit Syn 12/18
Genise Syn 12/27 (these 2 are really siblings with a loong labor...)

Ron Zander 12/07

and the piece de resistance... Samantha Vance 12/25 (we bet you get a lot of Christmas presents...)

Events and then some

by Jack Parker

The Christmas party, organized by Gundi Bechthold, is coming up on December 6. The party will once again take place at the Lion's Gate Hotel. No host cocktails start at 6:00 PM. For more information contact Gundi at gundib@gmail.com or 916-784-3123. A menu can be found on the website.

On Friday December 12th we will again be blessed with a full moon. Weather permitting, this event will be a nice leisurely stroll along the Sacramento River to observe and develop a nocturnal tan. We will meet at the Starbucks Coffee Shop in West Sacramento at 715 Harbor Point Place. Since this is a Friday night and we have no life other than our Miata's, we shall meet around 6:30 and leave at 7:00 p.m.. There are fast food restaurants in the area. We should be back by 9:00 p.m.. The route is unassuming and smooth. Be sure to wear warm clothing so you can observe the spectacular full moon with your tops down (contradiction). We will mingle along and after the route as needed. Contact Robin George at robin@winfirst.com or (916) 359-2627 for more information.

Our next event is Wreaths Across America, a nationwide event which honors our Nation's fallen heroes. Wreaths adorned with red ribbons will be placed on the graves of our fallen soldiers at National Cemeteries at ceremonies to be held concurrently on Saturday, December 13th, 2008 at 9:00 am PST. Mike, Helen, Robin & I will lead the group to the Sacramento Valley VA National Cemetery in Dixon. We will attend the Memorial ceremony and afterwards join other volunteers place wreaths on the gravesites. We will meet at the Davis McDonald's located at 4444 Chiles Rd near the Mace Blvd. exit from I80. Meeting time is 7:45 am and will depart for the cemetery promptly at 8:00 am. Mike and Helen have found back roads for the drive to Dixon. After the ceremony we will drive to Winters for lunch at Round Table Pizza. Please join the DeLaurentis' and the George's for this memorable experience. If you have questions, contact Mike or Helen at mdelarentis@hotmail.com or Jeanne at jeanne@winfirst.com or 916 359-2627.

That concludes our 2008 calendar of events. It has been a memorable year with a few first ever events and a lot of reruns of past successful rides. The coming year promises to be one of the busiest and most memorable in recent years. The recent survey sent to all members (120) saw 31 surveys returned. With those results we will be structuring the coming year. We are currently looking for a large parking/whatever lot to maybe have a fun gymkhana event. This doesn't have to an autocross sized lot but has to have a lot of room for turning and slaloms. A poker run and time speed and distance event may also see reality. The Driver's Weekend event is NOT for wimps. We had an overwhelmingly favorable response to that and have begun developing the timing and accommodations. the Kirkwood run was found to be the popular event on the survey and is currently scheduled for June 27. A wine tasting event is being planned as well.

So here's to a great new year of fantastic rides, beautiful scenery and great cars.

Full Moon Run

by Robin George

On Friday December 12th we will again be blessed with a full moon. Weather permitting, this event will be a nice leisurely stroll along the Sacramento River to observe and develop a nocturnal tan. We will meet at the Starbucks Coffee Shop in West Sacramento. Address is:

715 Harbor Point Place
West Sacramento, CA 95605
916-371-3524



See map below:

<http://www.starbucks.com/Retail/Find/storedetails.aspx?sid=74980&coords=west Sacramento|38.59208652735084|-121.55329227447511|14&fs=1>

Since this is a Friday night and we have no life other than our Miata's, we shall meet around 6:30 and leave at 7:00 pm. There are fast food restaurants in the area. We should be back by 9:00 pm. The route is unassuming and smooth. Be sure to wear warm clothing so you can observe the spectacular full moon with your tops down (contradiction). We will mingle along and after the route as needed.



Upcoming SAMOA and Local Events



- Sat Dec 6 - SAMOA Christmas Party
- Thurs Dec 11 - SAMOA Club Meeting
- Friday Dec 12 - Full Moon Run
- Sat Dec 13 - Wreaths Across America

Look at all the open space! Want to help set up an event? Contact Jack Parker!

Bailout

by Mike DeLaurentis

I think SAMOA needs a bailout. We have ample cash reserves in the bank thanks to the SAMOANS who ran Gold Rush years ago and the subsequent officers who preserved that cash, but everyone else is asking for a bailout and I think we would look out of touch if we didn't plus there may not be any money left if we wait.



We don't need much. Maybe we'll ask Mazda for \$10,000 or so to be used toward the purchase of an older Miata which we fix up and raffle off. Maybe Ron Petrich would win it so he doesn't have to always sheepishly place himself at the end of the line in his 2007 Miata with the "Honda S2000 package".

Or maybe we could ask Mayor elect Johnson for a mere \$30,000 to purchase a new Miata which we could raffle off and make someone very happy. Jack Parker might win that so he doesn't have to drive the Corvette thingy.

I'm sure Governor Schwarzenegger could afford \$300,000 so we could purchase one of those nasty repos that are cluttering the market. With the average price of a Sacramento home now at \$190,000 we'll be able to purchase one and fix it up to use as our clubhouse. No more dealing with cramped restaurants and we'll bring in a caterer each month. We could rent it out to other car clubs and use the rent to cover expenses.

The City of Roseville is spending \$3M to upgrade the Auto Mall "Great Wall". I'll bet they could afford to slide \$400,000 or so our way so we could purchase a house in that neck of the woods for the average price of \$317,250. We could fix that up as well and rent it out providing the tenants didn't mind 60+ people and 40+ cars showing up for dinner on the second Thursday of each month.

Or why not go to President Elect Obama and Treasury Secretary elect Geithner and ask for \$1.5M so we could pick up one of the nice little shacks on the market in Los Lagos and turn that into THEE clubhouse to end all clubhouses? Robin said he and Jeanne would be care takers although the neighbors might have a problem with a school bus parked in the driveway.

I'll start applying to Barack right now and appeal to him on the fact that I used to live in Illinois and my Mother was a Democratic Precinct Captain. What? That McCain-Palin sign on my front lawn? Just a sham. After all I live in Placer County and I have to fit in. I pulled the Obama lever Barry....really.....no kidding..... I did.

Etc...

by Robin George

The Sacramento Area Miata Owners Association Board of Officers wish to thank Mark Brooks for his service as the 2008 Technical Advisor. This position on the BOO offers club members a resource for any mechanical problems one might encounter with their Miata. At the General Meetings, current tips and recalls would be provided plus answers to various questions the attending members would have. Mark handled his duties exceptionally and during Board meetings was a clear voice in a sea of sometimes confusion. Due to scheduling and family obligations Mark will be unable to run for a second term in 2009. I personally wish to thank Mark for his service to the club including his friendship. Mark has graciously agreed to continue to publish the Miatatudes for the club. We all look forward to each issue.



Charity Donations..

by Jeanne George

Children's Receiving Home of Sacramento Donation

Christine Endres, Executive Assistant from The Children's Receiving Home of Sacramento attended the SAMOA November meeting. Robin presented Christine with an \$800 check to benefit the children. The funds were donations received from members attending the Birthday Party and the Scramble Scrabble events.



Wreaths Across America

Thank you to the members that donated monies to purchase wreaths for this nationwide project to decorate the graves of our veterans. On your behalf I placed an order for 15 wreaths to be sent to the Sacramento Valley VA Cemetery in Dixon. They will arrive in time for placement on December 13th.

Other members went online and placed their orders. Thank you for being a part of this project.



Teddy Bear and Toy Run

by Jeanne George

On the day of SAMOA's Teddy Bear Run, led by Jack Parker, Robin was in Pittsburgh for a football game. I wasn't feeling well but drove to the meeting location to drop off several bags of bears. The event was attended by more members than Jack was expecting. As a result, his car was filled with toys. I offered my car for the overload which was also filled up. Loaded into my car were 15 games and toys, 63 bears, rabbits, dinosaurs and a tricycle.

I heard that the drive included some good roads followed by nice lunch. Thank you to Jack for organizing this worthwhile event. Thank you to all the members who donated gifts for the children.

On November 11th, Sally, Jack, Robin and I took the toys and bears to the Children's Receiving Home of Sacramento.

Wreaths across America

by Jeanne George

Wreaths Across America, is a nationwide event which honors our Nation's fallen heroes. Wreaths adorned with red ribbons will be placed on the graves of our fallen soldiers at National Cemeteries at ceremonies to be held concurrently on Saturday, December 13th, 2008 at 9:00 am PST.

Mike, Helen, Robin & I will lead the group to the Sacramento Valley VA National Cemetery in Dixon. We will attend the Memorial ceremony and afterwards join other volunteers place wreaths on the gravesites.

We will meet at the Davis McDonald's located at 4444 Chiles Rd near the Mace Blvd. exit from I80. Meeting time is 7:45 am and will depart for the cemetery promptly at 8:00 am. Mike and Helen have found back roads for the drive to Dixon. After the ceremony we will drive to Winters for lunch at Round Table Pizza.

Please join the DeLaurentis' and the George's for this memorable experience. If you have questions, contact Mike mdelarentis@hotmail.com or Jeanne at jeanne@winfirst.com or 916 359-2627.

<http://www.wreaths-across-america.org>



Care Packages

by Mike DeLaurentis

SAMOA is embarking on a program to send necessary articles to our service men and women who are deployed to combat zones. The club will pay for the packaging and postage and we are asking members to donate items. Bring the items to each meeting and we will take care of mailing them. The articles that are welcomed and needed are:

Beef Jerky	Different kinds of potato chips
Black Medium Weight Socks - The combat boots wear them out	Slippers
Disposable Cameras	Ink Pens & Paper
Chapstick with Sunscreen	Crystal Ice
Sunscreen —Solid and in a stick or lotion	Canned Foods (Tuna, etc.)
Unsweetened and pre-sweetened dry drink mixes that can be added to water	Hard candy
Gloves with and without removable fingers	Ear plugs
Different size Ziploc bags and containers to store their goodies in	Salami/ Pepperoni
DVDs	Black & White Plain T-Shirts of all sizes
Razors for Men & Women	Ready-To-Eat Soups – Just add hot water
Unscented Lotion	Pop Tarts
Foot Powder	Batteries
Magazines	Plastic forks, spoons and knives
Unscented, pre-moistened wipes	Dental Floss
Shaving Cream	Crackers
Cookies	Journals
Trail Mix	Wearable Heat Packs
Canned dips and cheeses	Toothpaste
Games	Tweezers
Hats & Scarves	Granola Bars
Phone Cards	Dry Cereal
Holiday Decorations	Mouthwash

The first care package will be sent to Pam and Randy Hunt's Son Dylan who is stationed in Iraq. Here are the items Dylan says go over big:

Pistachios
DVDs- Mel Brooks stuff, action or comedy
Books-Action type, Dean Koontz, Dale Brown
Slingshot-for the camel spiders
Fly repellent- OFF or Cutters
Fly paper (REALLY!!) They need it to hang in their rooms
Crackers-the type that are with peanut butter in the middle
Gatorade powder-preferably Fruit Punch but about anything will do.
Phone Calling cards- these are best ordered on line from the military shopping site www.aafes.com. This is a military shopping site where family and friends can purchase the cards. Most of the phone cards available for purchase elsewhere have little value for overseas calling. For example a 1000 minute AT&T card is only good for about 90 minutes of actual talking time due to the additional changes. The cards you purchase from AAFES, made specifically for Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan, get around 125 minutes on a 550 minute card and for less money.



We would also like the names and addresses of other service men and women serving in combat areas whom you know, and who are family and friends. We will send subsequent packages to them.

Questions? Call or email Mike DeLaurentis at 916.791.9418 or mdelaurentis@hotmail.com.

The Perfect Gift

by Mark Brooks

As Christmas comes around, we're all scrambling to find that "perfect gift" for friends, family, coworkers, mailman, tax preparer, lawn mower, and everyone else on our lists. This year, more so than ever in most of our lives, money is pretty tight. So we're all looking to find a gift that fits the budget but still has meaning and thoughtfulness behind it. I know I'm not only speaking for myself when I say that I don't need any more 'crap' just for 'craps' sake. If you are truly looking to give a meaningful, heartfelt and selfless gift, it can be done for free. Go donate blood. I was giving a double red cell donation today, which I was able to earmark for a close friends nephew who has Leukemia, and was thinking about him in the hospital. I'm sure that at this point, he doesn't care about Transformers, Buzz Lightyear, or GI Joe. He wants to live. And his parents want help. I know that the blood that I gave today will go to him (my blood type is O Negative - the universal donor), and will help in his treatments. I think that out of all the gifts I'll be buying this year, that one is the most meaningful. Donating blood is a simple, painless process, but it's amazing how many people are reluctant to do it. If you are physically capable, you should give it a shot - it doesn't hurt, and actually makes you feel pretty good about what you've done. Find a donation center near you, and donate. www.bloodsource.org .. Save a life, one pint at a time.

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!