

The INDEPENDENT

Published on the first and third Wednesdays of each month by The Independent, LLC, 725 Bridge St., Vernonia, OR 97064. Phone/Fax: 503-429-9410. Deadline is noon the Friday before each issue. Publisher Clark McGaugh, clark@the-independent.net Editor Rebecca McGaugh, rebecca@the-independent.net Printed on recycled paper with vegetable based dyes

Opinion

Our Christmas List is done!

One item was crossed off our Christmas list recently – Bring the troops home from Iraq. That’s in the works. We’ve seen a number of news articles about why the troops are leaving Iraq, but we are just happy they are coming home. Now for the rest of our list;

- Bring home all the troops from Afganistan.
- Release anyone in Guantanamo who is held on evidence that is insufficient for prosecution in a civil court of law.
- Close Guantanamo.
- Healthcare for all Americans.
- Education up to the level of interest for all.
- All U.S. manufacturing jobs brought back to U.S.
- End pay disparity between upper management and workers.
- End all forms of discrimination.
- End child abuse.
- End domestic abuse.
- End animal abuse.
- End drug and alcohol abuse.
- Make all politicians honest.
- Eliminate greed.
- Get rid of unrelated riders on legislative bills.
- Simplify the tax code.
- Take personhood away from corporations.
- Get rid of lobbyists.
- End homelessness.
- Eliminate poverty, hunger and hatred.
- Let there be peace on Earth and goodwill toward all humankind.

Apparently we have been more naughty than nice this year, as it does not appear that we’ll wake up Christmas morning with all of our wish list under the tree.

*Merry Christmas
to All and a
Happy New Year!*



Out of My Mind . . .

by Noni Andersen



Christmas is four days from today; is this the season of good will toward all? If so, it’s not obvious. During several debates among Republican candidates for president, I’ve seen audiences enthusiastically clapping for capital punishment,

cheering about letting an unemployed, previously healthy 30 year-old die because he didn’t have health insurance, and booing a soldier on active duty in Iraq because he was gay.

Now, many of the same people are decrying the “War on Christmas” with slogans like “Remember the Reason for the Season”, while criticizing others for using the term “holiday” instead of “Christmas”.

There is no war on Christmas, and the season doesn’t belong to any specific faith. Throughout history, mankind has celebrated during winter, and many modern Christmas traditions derive from elements of previous cultures.

Romans held a week-long mid-December celebration honoring the Roman god Saturn, which included gift-giving. The Jewish celebration of Hannukah, also held in mid-winter, includes gift-giving and also pre-dates Christianity.

Other elements came from the Roman New Year and the pagan Yule festival, including the Christmas tree.

The origins of Christmas customs don’t make

Christmas less important, nor do they make Christmas more important. But trying to make the season solely about the Christian tradition is futile, because it encompasses much more.

How about emphasizing something that includes all religions? Striving to live by the “Golden Rule”, a tenet of all religions, would make us much better people. Here are some choices:

Brahmanism: This is the sum of duty: Do naught unto others which would cause you pain if done to you. — *Mahabharata 5:1517*

Buddhism: Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful. — *Udana Varga 5:18*

Christianity: All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them. — *Matthew 7:12*

Confucianism: Surely it is the maxim of loving-kindness: Do not unto others that you would not have them do unto you. — *Analects 15:23*

Islam: No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself. — *Sunnah*

Judaism: What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow men. That is the entire Law; all the rest is commentary. — *Talmud, Shabbat 31:a*

Taoism: Regard your neighbor’s gain as your own gain, and your neighbor’s loss as your own loss. — *T’ai Shag Kan Ying P’ien*

Zoroastrianism: That nature alone is good which refrains from doing unto another whatsoever is not good for itself. — *Dadistan-i-dinik 94:5*

If we embrace our own faith traditions while respecting the traditions of others, we may truly achieve peace on earth.