

## COMMENTARY

### Merry Christmas from Richard Stokes

*Reminder: In observance of the winter holidays, there will be no school in the Carson City School District for two weeks (Dec. 21 to Jan. 1).*

Dear Friends:

On a cold Christmas Eve in 1914, German, French and British soldiers hunkered down in the muddy trenches that had become their home during World War I. Between those trenches was a war-torn expanse of ground that was simply referred to as “no-man’s land.”

That evening, the troops on both sides finished their evening meals and gathered in small groups. Most were likely thinking of



Richard Stokes

home, rereading letters or looking at tattered photographs of loved ones as they had so many times before. Familiar yuletide music was sung in both camps and Christmas trees trimmed with candles could be seen atop the parapets. With the uncertainty of what tomorrow might bring, the soldiers of both sides likely reflected on the meaning of the season and remembered happier times of Christmases past.

The harmonious music was in stark contrast to the noise of exploding bombs and the anguished cries of injured and dying men just hours earlier. As the traditional Christmas music floated between the trenches, soldiers of both armies began proclaiming holiday greetings to their opponents in the native tongue of their foes. What a transformation when just hours before, this war-torn field had been the place of turmoil, destruction and death. Now, on that Christmas Eve, something profound stirred the hearts of these hardened men and the night had truly become holy.

On Christmas morning, soldiers from the opposing sides petitioned the other to agree to a day of celebration with an absence of hostilities. And then it happened. In this part of the war, on this Christmas day, soldiers from both sides emerged from the trenches and met unarmed on the former field of battle. Here, two warring ideologies had united under the banner of Christmas and were now meeting face to face, smiling, shaking hands and sharing precious homemade goodies and souvenirs. This courageous and chivalrous event known in history as the “Christmas Day Armistice” is a powerful example of what is possible during Christmas. With such a beginning, it is difficult to imagine what the participants must have felt as that miraculous day ended and they faced an uncertain tomorrow.

For nine months, we, too, have been at war. Our enemy is unseen, but its effects have been tragic. This foe has brought illness, fear, death and a loss of freedom to our lives. Even though facemasks and social distancing limit this holiday season, Christmas is still a time of miracles. Even though we are confined in our interactions and reduced in our social activities, I continue to see amazing acts of goodness and humanity everywhere I look in our community and schools. Thank you for the service you continue to provide. I am thrilled to have you as my colleagues, friends and neighbors and am proud to join you this holiday season as we look forward to a new year, one full of hope, promise, peace and good will. Merry Christmas!

Sincerely,

Richard Stokes  
Superintendent  
Carson City School District

### ‘Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus’

We take pleasure in answering thus prominently the communication below, expressing at the same time our great gratification that its faithful author is numbered among the friends of The Sun:

**DEAR EDITOR:** I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says, ‘If you see it in THE SUN it’s so.’ Please tell me the truth; is there a Santa Claus?

VIRGINIA O’HANLON.

VIRGINIA, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men’s or children’s, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about

him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, VIRGINIA, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus. It would be as dreary as if there were no VIRGINIAS. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things

in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that’s no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You may tear apart the baby’s rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, VIRGINIA, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God! he lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

— By Francis P. Church, New York Sun, 1897

## PAST PAGES

By Trent Dolan

### Wednesday

#### 145 YEARS AGO

At the Mint Treasury, yesterday, 51,000 dimes were received from the hands of the coiner. These will go to Boston where 300,000 have already been sent and where 200,000 are yet to go. That’s a business of a novel sort — a sort of dime novel sort, in fact

#### 130 YEARS AGO

Events at Empire. In the afternoon a farmer and his wife drove in from the country with a crate of chickens and two pigs. The pigs got loose, and one running between the legs of Senator Williams upset the gentleman, and the other ran into Mr. Morris’ store, and after being chased by the clerk, ran down the cellar stairs, just as Mr. Morris was coming up with a gallon of molasses. The pig went headlong into the molasses pail, and the pig, the molasses, and the county commissioner went down the stairs.

#### 120 YEARS AGO

Turkeys. Persons desiring fine fat turkeys for Christmas dinner can obtain the same by leaving orders at the Appeal office.

#### 110 YEARS AGO

Editor Appeal: — I believe that you are mistaken with reference to the point of delivery in Nevada of the U.S. Mail by Snowshoe Thompson, during the sixties. He did not deliver the mail at Woodfords or in Diamond Valley, nor did he go that way. He delivered the mail directly to Genoa. On the California side he had no positive point, but would go as far as necessary to meet the pony express. — Alfred Chartz.

#### 100 YEARS AGO

After canvassing the suggestion cards filed by members, the directors of the Greater Carson Club have

adopted a program of work calculated to carry out the wishes and desires of the members and subscribers. The first work to be undertaken is the of housing, and in order to take care of the crowds that will be here during the session of the legislature.

### Thursday

#### 145 YEARS AGO

Celebration of St. John’s Day by the Colored Masons. On the evening of the 27th instant, the members of the colored lodge of Masons in this city will have a social reunion. From a bit of information which came our way last evening, we infer they intend to celebrate the day in a very full and elaborate manner in the anniversary of St. John the Evangelist.

#### 130 YEARS AGO

Fight. The disappearance of Kehoe the fighter, who left the Comstock with a buxom widow is still the talk of the locality. McCormack of this city, who when he last fought Kehoe lost the fight on an alleged foul, has been in training to again challenge Kehoe and he proposed to make him fight or leave the State.

#### 120 YEARS AGO

The citizens of Tuscarora have formed a safety committee to see that all cases of smallpox are properly quarantined.

#### 110 YEARS AGO

Yesterday Attorney General Stoddard rendered an opinion of slot machines in this state. In reply to District Attorney Tilden of Esmeralda County Mr. Stoddard holds that slot machines may be operated without violating the Anti-gambling law, so long as checks given are redeemable in merchandise, cigars, etc., and not money.

#### 100 YEARS AGO

The second work of order of the

Greater Carson Club is to promote civic pride. To work for a city beautiful by eliminating everything offensive. To instill pride in the cleanliness and order of public and private property.

### Friday

#### 145 YEARS AGO

The Sights of Christmas Eve. The State Orphans Home Alive with Cheer and Delight. Kris Kringle came in with a tremendous gust last night. The wind blew in tremendous fits and starts; the Pogonip reared its lovely head over the Sierra; the eastern sky looked black and threatening, and as the blast went wailing by, it made pedestrians hurry to the end of their errands.

#### 130 YEARS AGO

The city of Carson has always been a prime favorite of Santa Claus. Ever since the place was first settled by the whites, Christmas has been celebrated here with great élat. When the old fellow is arranging for his December tour he remarks: “No matter what happens, I must take in Carson, even if I have to leave out Virginia City and Hawthorne.”

#### 120 YEARS AGO

Tonight the dance at Empire will take place. If you wish to spend Christmas night with the prettiest girls in the State and best dancers go to the dance.

#### 110 YEARS AGO

Yesterday evening the children at the Orphan’s Home will be given their annual Christmas tree and entertainment. A handsome tree has been decorated for the occasion and it will be well loaded with toys and gifts for the orphan youngsters.