

## Annan Jensen: Appreciation for the solstice

Contributed by Sophie Annan Jensen  
Thursday, 25 December 2008

Last year lakeconews.com published a charming report from Carlé High students on their kickoff of winter break and the solstice celebration.

They said, "The earliest human civilizations on earth first created celebrations such as the ones we have today as a way to keep people's spirits up during the darkest and coldest time of the year. This can be a dark time of year for some of the students that attend here, so like our ancestors before us, we use the exchange of gifts to bring joy to them."

There wasn't a single critical comment on the column, so let's assume nobody took it as another battle in the fictional war on Christmas.

This is, literally, the darkest time of year, when we have the winter solstice, the longest night and shortest day of the year. It's a science kind of thing, and it's been recognized for millennia by people sure they were seeing a yearly miracle.

It happened Sunday, Dec. 21, 2008, at 3:04 AM PT when the sun was at its most southerly position from our constantly moving planet. Winter began in the Northern Hemisphere and summer in the Southern Hemisphere. That's all. Between Wednesday, as I write this, and Sunday we'll gain a full minute of daylight.

A minute doesn't sound like much but it's worth celebrating, because it's a start on longer days, and the spring miracle. Don't you feel better already?

The ground will get warmer, planting time will come, we'll all get out of our caves, spend more time under those precious rays and start recovering from the Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) that sends us grumping off for long naps or snapping at our loved ones.

Is it worth fighting over? No. Are there rules about how to celebrate? No. At least, not for those of good will. Except this: all over the world, whatever it's called, it's also a festival of light.

So lighten up, OK?

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