

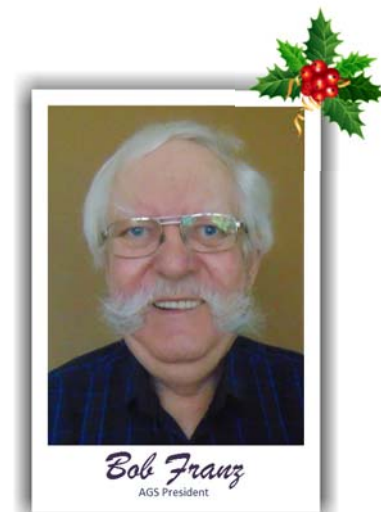


The President's Message

Christmas 2017

What other celebration is so entwined with

our cherished concepts of family and children? My earliest memory of Christmas is being herded into my grandparents' sun porch with my cousins to await the clumping of boots, ring of the cow bell, and a hearty "ho-ho-ho" and the swinging open of the door to reveal Santa himself. Not only did he have a gift for each of us in his sack, but he knew each of us by name, sure proof he was the jolly elf himself. Of course, older cousins sagely informed



us that it was actually Grandma's older brother John because they recognized his boots, and that the real Santa came later when we were asleep. It was some years later that I discovered Christmas was about another bearded man, this one from Nazareth, not the North Pole. And it was still some years after that, that I discovered Christmas for many was really about a message of peace, goodwill, and hope for the future.



Genealogy is about family, and family is about the values, beliefs and traditions that have

been passed down from generation to generation, including celebrations such as Christmas. Just as those change over time as we grow older, so have they changed over time in our society. In 1583, Philip Stubbes had this to say:

Notwithstanding, who is ignorant that more mischief is that time [Christmas] committed than in all the yeere belides? What moulding and mumming! wherby robbrie, whordome, murther, and what not, is committed! what dicing & carding, what eating and drinking, what banqueting

and feasting is than used more than in all the yeere besides! to the great dishonor of GOD, and impoverishing of the realme.¹



It may be hard to believe that at that time Parliament passed a law making the celebration of Christmas illegal and all good Christians were cautioned about its vices. Or perhaps it is not that difficult to believe. The Christmas of today is not the Christmas of my childhood. Today merchants begin promotion of Christmas sales and we are bombarded with canned Christmas music the day after Thanksgiving. Today we read of schools cancelling the traditional family Christmas concert in the name of diversity and inclusion and in the fear of offending someone, and we cautiously greet each other with euphemisms like “best of the season” or “festive greetings” instead of proclaiming what we are really celebrating.

This has been a difficult and challenging year for AGS, but also as reported at the Directors November meeting, it has been a year of great successes and individual achievements and of progress of which each and every one of us can be proud. We have been steadfast in the services we are providing, and have great plans for even better and more services for members next year. So as this year comes to a close and we look forward to still more accomplishments in the New Year, whatever

your personal beliefs and family traditions, I extend to all of you wishes for a very merry Christmas and for a happy and prosperous New Year.

This is Bob. Let me know what you think.

Robert "Bob" Franz

AGS President

Background

In *The Anatomie of Abuses*, Philip Stubbes – a pamphleteer – rails against aspects of popular culture that he believes are immoral and in need of reform if his fellow countrymen and women are to escape punishment from God. The subjects that come under criticism include some we might expect – visiting prostitutes, lending money at interest, drunkenness and gluttony – and others we may find surprising – the wearing of fancy clothing, the variety of hats available, attending the theatre, playing sports and dancing.

¹ Stubbe, Phillip. “Cards, Dice, Tables, Tennis, Bowles, and other exercises, used unlawfully in Ailgna [England],” *The Anatomie of Abuses : Containing a Discovery ...*, (London : Richard Iones, 1584), digital, at *Early English Books Online* (<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A13086.0001.001/1:22?rgn=div1;view=fulltext>) : 14 December 2017); citing University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.