

Each week, we enter your homes and tell you all about what has been happening in and around our community in the last seven days.

It's our job and our passion. We hope you enjoy our visits.

We continuously strive to provide you with accurate, honest information. After all, you are kind enough to welcome us into your home week after week.

We sincerely wish you a

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

WINCHESTER PRESS
545 St. Lawrence Street
Winchester
774-2524

CHRISTMAS



Special Supplement to the *Winchester Press*
Wed., December 17, 2003

GREETINGS

Edwards couple dedicates retirement to holiday happiness

by Jason Burgoone

EDWARDS — After years of research and effort, children across the country need not wonder any longer, Santa's home has been discovered. Hidden within the tiny community of Edwards, Brian and Betty McGowan, a.k.a. Mr. and Mrs. Claus, exemplify the tradition of Christmas spirit 365 days a year, wherever they may be.

Now in his fifth full year of ambassadorship, Brian, with the help of wife Betty, has taken it upon himself to spread goodwill across Ontario and throughout North America.

Featured on our cover

The McGowans' journey first began when their eldest daughter, Laura, started bringing exotic animals home when she was in university. "Right around that time I had taken a couple of heart attacks and had decided to cut back on the farming," said Brian. Little did they know their interest in exotic animals would lead them to a second and much different career choice.

"I had always loved llamas and alpacas," said Betty. "And Brian had his heart set on owning his own reindeer." Twelve years later, the McGowans' farm is home to hundreds of exotic animals, including a handful of reindeer and more than a dozen llamas.

Having purchased the reindeer, Brian then turned his attention to training them. He spent the next few years criss-crossing provinces and neighboring states training reindeer alongside some of the top trainers in North America.

"I guess about six or seven years ago a guy came up to me when I was (training) in Michigan and said I like your laugh, have you ever been a Santa?" remembered McGowan. With his bright white hair and beard, he replied "yes" and was told of a unique school in the state of Michigan, which provided all the tools necessary to become a well-rounded ambassador for the holiday sprit.

"The school I ended up at was in Midland, Michigan. It's called the Charles W. Howard Santa School," said McGowan. The school is noted to be the oldest Santa Claus school in the world. Potential Santas come from across North America, and a few students from other parts of the world.



Living the holiday spirit

Santa and Mrs. Claus (Brian and Betty McGowan) spend some quality time with one of their reindeer at their farm in Edwards.

"I didn't know what to expect, but it turned out to be four days of some pretty extensive training," said McGowan. "You had to learn to deal with problem children, some basic sign language, edict, and marketing. You spent half a day with a representative from Toys-R-Us, as he explained about some of the new toys to come out that year."

With the help of Midland city officials and the Dow Foundation's half a million dollar donation, the Charles W. Howard Santa School was moved to its present location and then transformed into something only children could dream about.

"The kids are just in awe, actually I was too," describes Betty regarding her first visit to the recently renovated school. Betty recently became the only woman in Canada to complete the program and now boasts a BA in Santa Claus lore. Betty is now requested equally as much as her husband, also the recipient of a BA, to attend parties, school assemblies, or charity functions.

Brian recently received certificates of community involvement from both Ottawa mayor Bob Chiarelli and Osgoode Ward councillor Doug Thompson for his work. Betty is not to be outdone and continues her involvement as the organizer of the Metcalfe Christmas parade, with the help of her husband and local volunteers.

With his list of expanding Christmas season commitments, little time is left to pencil in his other hobbies, television, radio and film work.

Each of the animals on the McGowans' farm has been hand-raised making them excellent candidates for product promotion. Brian regularly gets requests for both himself and his animals from production crews and studios in both Canada and the United Sates.

The McGowans will continue to answer the countless requests for holiday bookings and community events until the Christmas season winds up. They also welcome visitors out for a tour of the farm.

Anyone interested in requesting Brian and Betty's services can contact them at 821-1840 or send an e-mail to brian.mcgowan@sympatico.ca.

Happy Holidays

Here's hoping your Christmas really stacks up!

SHADBOLT'S
Stedmans V&S
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Happy Holidays

Our family would like to wish you all a safe, happy an "egg-citing" holiday season.

Wouters Poultry Farm

Tony, Trish and the Chicks

Tidings Of Comfort & Joy

Here's hoping your holiday season is overflowing with the many blessings this great time of year has to offer...

ANDY'S FOODLAND
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774-2125

Yes, Virginia

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION
From *The People's Almanac,* pp. 1358-9.

Francis P. Church's editorial, "Yes Virginia, There is a Santa Claus" was an immediate sensation, and became one of the most famous editorials ever written. It first appeared in the the *New York Sun* in 1897, almost a hundred years ago, and was reprinted annually until 1949 when the paper went out of business.

Thirty-six years after her letter was printed, Virginia O'Hanlon recalled the events that prompted her letter:

"Quite naturally I believed in Santa Claus, for he had never disappointed me. But when less fortunate little boys and girls said there wasn't any Santa Claus, I was filled with doubts. I asked my father, and he was a little evasive on the subject."

"It was a habit in our family that whenever any doubts came up as to how to pronounce a word, or some question of historical fact was in doubt, we wrote to the Question and Answer column in *The Sun*. Father would always say, 'If you see it in the *The Sun,* it's so,' and that settled the matter."

"'Well, I'm just going to write *The Sun* and find out the real truth,' I said to father."

"He said, 'Go ahead, Virginia. I'm sure *The Sun* will give you the right answer, as it always does.'"

And so Virginia sat down and wrote her parents' favorite newspaper.

Her letter found its way into the hands of a veteran editor, Francis P. Church. Son of a Baptist minister, Church had covered the Civil War for the New York Times and had worked on the the *New York Sun* for 20 years, more recently as an anonymous editorial writer. Church, a sardonic man, had for his personal motto, "Endeavor to clear your mind of cant." When controversial subjects had to be tackled on the editorial page, especially those dealing with theology, the assignments were usually given to Church.

Now, he had in his hands a little girl's letter on a most controversial matter, and he was burdened with the responsibility of answering it.

"Is there a Santa Claus?" the childish scrawl in the letter asked. At once, Church knew that there was no avoiding the question. He must answer, and he must answer truthfully. And so he turned to his desk, and he began his reply which was to become one of the most memorable editorials in newspaper history.

Church married shortly after the editorial appeared. He died in April, 1906, leaving no children.

Virginia O'Hanlon went on to graduate from Hunter College with a bachelor of arts degree at age 21. The following year she received her master's from Columbia, and in 1912 she began teaching in the New York City school system, later becoming a principal. After 47 years, she retired as an educator. Throughout her life she received a steady stream of mail about her Santa Claus letter, and to each reply she attached an attractive printed copy of the Church editorial. Virginia O'Hanlon Douglas died on May 13, 1971, at the age of 81, in a nursing home in Valatie, N.Y.



Skeptic no more

When Jamie Strynzel of Russell tugged on Santa's beard, he could tell it was genuine.

Thanks

With gratitude at Christmas time to our many fine customers. Hope your holiday suits you to a tee!

Mayhew Sheet Metal
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Brad & Helen

Happy Holidays

In the rush of events, we tend to overlook the important friendships that are the true basis of business relationships. One of the great pleasures of the Holiday Season is the opportunity to exchange greetings with those whose friendship and goodwill are valued so highly.

In this spirit it is a pleasure to say 'Thank you' and extend sincere appreciation for the very pleasant association enjoyed with you.

May a bright and prosperous New Year bring happiness to you and yours.

Black Lumber Co. Ltd.
Morrisburg 543-3777

Glad Tidings To You

This little birdie stopped by to say, 'Hope you have a great holiday!' We really appreciate your kind support.

DERKS ELEVATOR INC.
Gary & Pat Derks & Family
Chesterville
448-2522



Erin Strynzel of Russell gave her list to Santa

Yes, Virginia

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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 external 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 you 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 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, 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 lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay 10 times 10,000 years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!!!

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Meeting with Santa at the Royal Bank in Winchester Kelsey Cochrane assured him that she's been a good girl this year. She was one of dozens of youngsters who met Santa before he appeared in the Parade of Lights.

Christmas greetings from the past





Above: This 1910 Christmas postcard is part of the Osgoode Township Museum's collection. It was sent to Master Fred Pratt of Kars from his grandma. Right: This card was personalized by a printer with the sender's name and town of residence. It was sent by Vince Kelly of Osgoode. Its art deco style suggests that it may be from the 1920s.

Birds, especially robins, were popular on Christmas cards from the early 1900s. This one was from Helen to Tommie and is also part of the museum's collection.



by Bonnie James
Press staff

VERNON — Some people seem to brag about the number of Christmas cards that they send, all neatly addressed, stamped and sent out in plenty of time to beat the holiday mail rush. Oh yes, with a lengthy Christmas letter enclosed in each as well.

For procrastinators, the tradition of Christmas cards seems designed to induce feelings of guilt and last minute scrambles to the post office. Despite how painful the process may be for some, if you enjoy receiving holiday cards, you should really send them too.

The English of the Victorian period are largely responsible for popularizing the Christmas card. However, New Years cards date back much earlier, and Valentine cards were already popular when the first Christmas cards were printed.

The first Christmas card was designed by J. C Horsley of England for Sir Henry Cole, the first director of London's Victoria and Albert Museum, in 1843. There were 1,000 copies printed and those that Cole didn't use were sold for one shilling each. The card had three images. In the centre was a family gathered at the dinner table, wine glasses in hand. One side panel showed a woman wrapping a cloak around another woman and a child. The other side panel depicted food being distributed among the poor.

Changes to the English postal system, namely the creation of the penny post, made it cheaper to mail cards, and the charge was paid by the sender rather than the recipient as it had been previously. By the 1860s, Christmas cards had become big business and were catching on in North America.

From the 1870s on, Christmas card sending flourished on this side of the ocean, thanks in part to a German immigrant by the name of Louis Prang. Prang's print shop introduced a line of Christmas visiting cards in 1875 and expanded as the years went on.

The Osgoode Township Museum in Vernon has a selection of historical holiday cards, including those pictured on this page. Many are postcards, which would have been cheaper to mail. Many of the cards in the museum's possession date from the very early 1900s and clearly show that the styles were much different than what we see today.

Spring-like pastoral scenes and flowers such as pansies and roses adorn some, which don't look at all Christmasy when viewed with today's eyes. Since Valentine cards were already popular, it makes sense that early Christmas cards would have been modeled on them, with flower and lace designs.

Birds also were a popular subject for early Christmas cards, especially the robin,

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SENDING OUR BEST
Please accept this load of good cheer, along with our thanks for your business this year! Have a great holiday!
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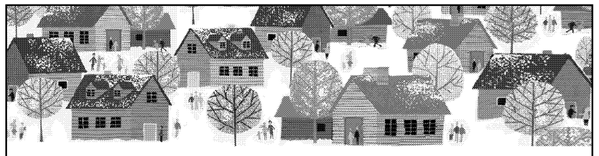
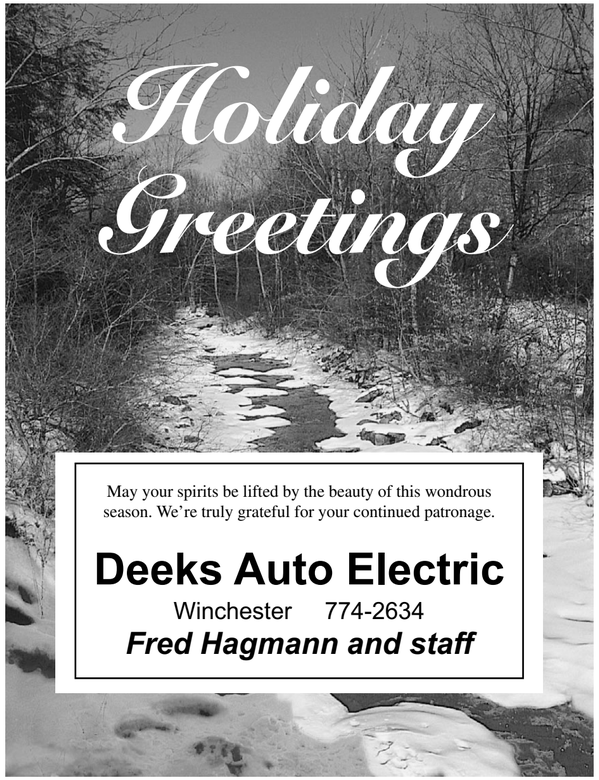


Home For The Holidays
There's no place we'd rather be for the holidays, than right here with our neighbors and friends.
Merry Christmas!
Guildcrest Homes
Morewood 613-448-1190



Holiday Greetings
May your spirits be lifted by the beauty of this wondrous season. We're truly grateful for your continued patronage.
Deeks Auto Electric
Winchester 774-2634
Fred Hagmann and staff

Greetings of the Season
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Trimmed With Our Thanks
... And our best wishes, too, to each and every one of you! Happy Holidays!
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Our stockings are hung, the tree's all aglow;
We're sending glad tidings to the people we know;
So before all the festivities begin, we'd like to thank you for your dropping in!
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Kemptville Mall, Kemptville 258-9055
Next to Human Resources Centre

Christmas cards

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which tradition said acquired its red breast by picking the bloody thorns out of Christ's forehead as he hung on the cross. As such, the robin was a symbol of peace. In England, pictures of a dead bird lying on the snow were used in the 1880s, presumably because they evoked feelings of pity and tenderness, which the Victorians valued.

Cards created during, or inspired by, the Victorian period were often very elaborate, using cutouts and a variety of shapes. They were sometimes embossed or frosted and frequently adorned with lace or ribbon. Trick cards with moving parts or pop-up cards were also popular among the Victorians.

Some of the cards at the Vernon museum resemble calling cards, with very little ornamentation. Instead, a verse or holiday message took centre stage. Several of these cards are monogrammed with the sender's initials. Rather than signing this personalized stationary by hand, the cards were printed with the sender's name and sometimes place of residence.

In the 1930s, the modern folded-style of card became the norm. Old Christmas cards make wonderful collectibles, because their designs often reflect the events of the times. For example, many cards were created during the Second World War which showed patriotic or wartime themes, such as Santa flying a bomber.

Cards haven't changed much since the 1960s, but small differences can still be noticed. The use of popular cartoon or theme characters evolved throughout the '70s and '80s, including Charlie Brown, Ziggy, Hollie Hobby, and Strawberry Shortcake. And cards also began to emulated the past, depicting scenes of Victorian-style Christmases.

People might call you a pack rat if you kept all your Christmas cards these days, but someday they will be of interest to future generations. Talk to elderly relatives to see if your family has any old Christmas cards. They may bring up memories that would be good to share. And if you have a chance, stop by the Osgoode Township Historical Society and Museum in Vernon and ask to see the Christmas card file.



This very early Christmas card looks more like a Valentine. It is probably from the late 1890s or 1910s and is part of the Osgoode Township Museum's collection.



Kelly Somerville, Nationview Public School, Grade 3



Nicole Hallam, Nationview Public School, Grade 4

Best Wishes from Our Family to Yours this Christmas and a Prosperous and Healthy Happy New Year

We appreciate your continued patronage and look forward to serving you next year!



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Christmas Is Looking Good!



This holiday greeting is trimmed with best wishes and thanks to our divine clients and friends. Knowing you has been simply heavenly for us.

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UNISEX HAIR STYLING AND TANNING SALON
Kathy, Trudy, Wendy, Brenda & Ashley
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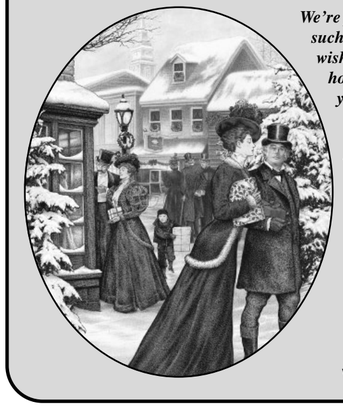
Yuletide Greetings



We're pleased and proud to have such wonderful neighbors, and wish all the best to all of you this holiday season. Thank you for your loyal support.

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Open Wednesday to Sunday, 10 am-5 pm
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Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus

Editorial Page, *New York Sun*, 1897

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 eight 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 scepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except what 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.

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Santa made his annual stop at the Winchester Royal Bank branch, meeting young people for nearly two hours before the Parade of Lights on Dec. 5. Emma Brooks of Mountain agreed to leave out some carrots this year for Santa's reindeer.



Dear Santa,

We are the kids from the Cornwall Caregivers Group, and this is what we would like for Christmas:
Leila - a purse
Jacob - a truck
Brayden - Hot Wheels (Monster Slime Pit)
Meaghan - Lina - a baby
Zennith - Hot Wheels Car Set
Zachary - Playdoh
Kelsey - Princess Barbie

Safe trip and a nice Christmas! I hope you get lots of cookies and milk.



HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL!

As we wrap up another year, we wish you all the blessings of the holiday season and thank you for the courtesy and friendship you've shown to us this past year.

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P.O. Box 970, Winchester, Ont.
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"Branches of holly in bright emerald sheen...
Poinsettias and pines, scents of sweet evergreen...
Wishes of joy, peace, and comfort serene."

Every December, one year to the next, the spirit of Christmas endures... And all of its warmth and good cheer can be found in these wishes from our home to yours.

At the Holiday Season, our thoughts turn gratefully to those who have made our progress possible. It is in this spirit we say...

Thank You and Best Wishes for the Holidays and a Happy New Year

Special thanks to my building contractors:
A&H Racine Construction - South Mountain (Allan and Heather)
Vriend Construction - Osgoode (Chris and Marilyn)
Byer's Carpentry - Crysler (David, Donna, Kevin and Ken)
Mark's Quality Carpentry - Kemptville (Mark and Mimi)
Vandemheen Construction - South Mountain (Lubbert and Wanda)
Barkley Construction - Inkerman (Kevin and Carolyn)
Klatt Masonry - Osgoode (Steven)

Help children understand the true spirit of gift giving

Bows and tinsel are just the beginning. In between all of the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, it's easy to forget that this time of year is about more than "getting stuff."

It's important to teach children that a true holiday gift comes from the heart of the giver and is intended to symbolize the love and caring between people. With all the commercialism around the holidays, it helps to remind kids that presents are just things, and real holiday gifts are those which come from the heart.

Remembering that gifts arise from the true spirit of giving, and don't have to cost a lot of money can change the focus of the season for both children and adults. Sometimes kids just need a little help coming up with ideas; here are a couple you can share with your children in the weeks before the holidays:

• Talk to children about why people exchange gifts. This can help them understand the symbolic importance of giving and receiving gifts. Encourage them to think about the holiday tradition and why they want to give something to people they care about.

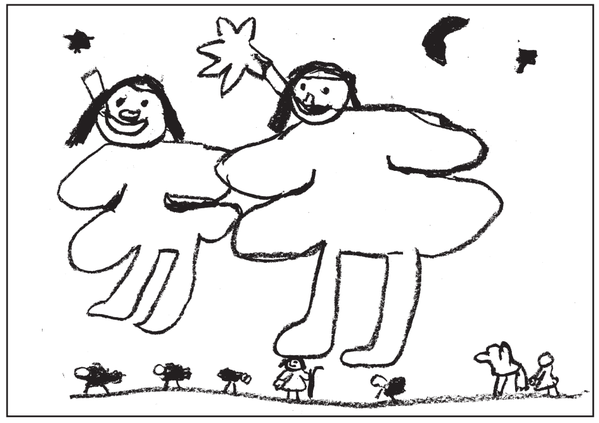
• Talk to children about what they want to give — not just about what they want to get. Grandparents are sure to be charmed by a gift of artwork from small children, as would patients in a local hospital, who could perhaps use some holiday cheer. Encourage the young ones to paint a picture or make a card.

• Suggest children consider giving a gift that lasts all year. If there are military families in your area, school-age children could "adopt" a member of the armed services as a pen pal to correspond with throughout the year.

The holiday season offers a chance to help children learn to become more generous toward others and more appreciative of the generosity they receive all year long.

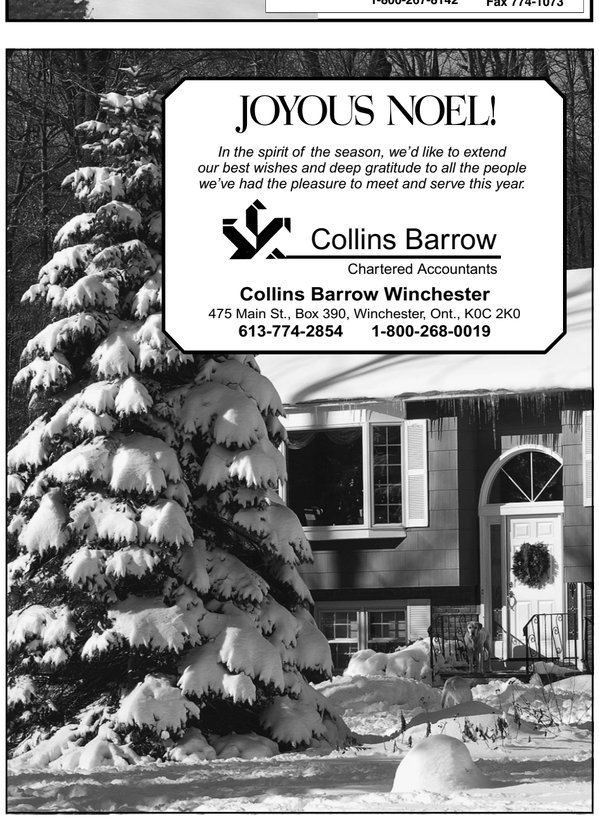


Tyler Como, Morewood Public School, Grade 3



Lanea Pol, Timothy Christian School, Grade 3





A GREAT CLOSING TO A GREAT YEAR!

Here's hoping this Holiday Season finds you surrounded by your loved ones in the warmth of home and hearth.

We appreciate your patronage and look forward to serving you again.

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PEACE and JOY

...And many thanks from us!
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It's whimsical; it's melancholy; it's ultimately full of wonder

"I know nobody likes me. Why do we have to have a Christmas season to emphasize it?"

— Charlie Brown

by Chris Zabel
Press staff

WINCHESTER — Arguably, *A Charlie Brown Christmas,* is the greatest Christmas special ever to be prepared for network TV broadcast in North America. For one thing, it's the longest-running animated special in television history.

A Charlie Brown Christmas was the first of nearly 50 Peanuts television movies. When it first aired on CBS-TV on Dec. 9, 1965, it attracted nearly 50 per cent of the viewing audience. Every year since, the 30-minute cartoon has been broadcast before Christmas.

Charlie Brown finds himself depressed at Christmas time, searching for the true meaning of the holiday amidst the glitz and commercialism of the modern age. He isn't receiving any Christmas cards, and his dog is focused on entering the neighborhood house decorating contest.

"What is the meaning of Christmas?" asks Charlie Brown. Talking about Christmas with his friends Linus and Lucy doesn't yield an instant answer. Lucy tells him, however, about a job no one else wants: directing the youth Christmas play. Charlie Brown takes up the job with full enthusiasm.





Hark the Herald Angels

The gang joins in song at the end of A Charlie Brown Christmas. *The withered tree that Charlie Brown bought for the Christmas play is transformed with decorations from Snoopy's dog house.*

This Christmas cartoon marked the first time the Peanuts gang was animated, and was the first time people saw Charlie Brown come to life. He's the well-meaning boy with low self-esteem who manages to make a mess of everything. The special focuses mainly on scenes with his dog Snoopy; his younger sister Sally; the Van Pelt children Linus and Lucy; piano prodigy Schroeder; and a group of neighborhood friends including Pig Pen and Frieda, the girl with naturally curly hair.

When Charlie Brown takes over as director of the Christmas play, all the kids in the neighborhood already have the impression that he's a loser, but they're willing to give him a chance. As rehersals begin, the play seems to be coming together reasonably well, until Charlie Brown goes out to buy a Christmas tree.

He decides that the play needs a Christmas tree to be the centre of the action. Lucy agrees with him, although her advice is to find the biggest aluminum tree he can find, and that maybe they'd paint it pink.

Charlie Brown goes to a tree lot with Linus to look at trees. Thinking he's uncovered the true meaning of Christmas, he decides to buy the most pathetic tree for sale. It's basically a branch nailed to a base, and it's so dead that it loses needles as soon as Charlie Brown picks it up. Although it's not the best tree, he feels empathy for the small one, and wants to celebrate it with his friends.

Charlie Brown returns to the rehearsal stage with the tree and places it on Schroeder's piano. Everyone thinks the tree is pathetic. No one understands why anyone would want it. Because he bought such a crappy tree, he's cast out as director, and he takes his tree with him.

A Charlie Brown Christmas started out as a highly controversial cartoon in its day. The original idea was criticized as being too religious — Linus quotes straight from the King James Bible (Luke 2:8-14). It was criticized for featuring the contemporary jazz piano of Vince Guaraldi, an offbeat choice for a cartoon. Additional second-guessing questioned why the voices of real children were used for the Peanuts gang (except for Snoopy, who was voiced by animator Bill Melendez).

So much artistic forethought had never been put into a TV Christmas special before, and it probably hasn't happened since.

In early 1965, Charles Shultz became famous when his Peanuts characters were featured on the cover of *Time* magazine.

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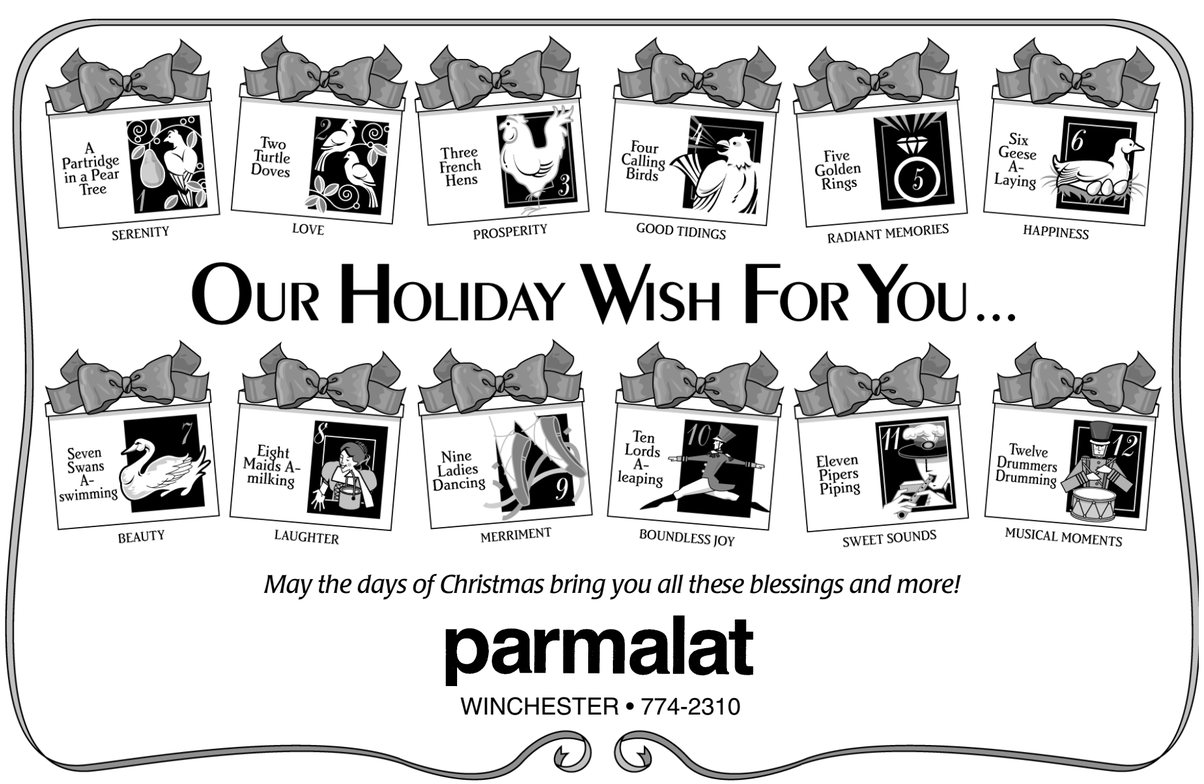

A Charlie Brown Christmas

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When the advertising department at Coca-Cola phoned him, saying they were impressed by some early animation footage of Charlie Brown, Shultz ended up bluffing that he already had a Christmas special in the works.

The next day, Shultz met with his animator for two hours and they sketched out the basics of the cartoon. It would include ice-skating; a pageant, a mix of Christmas carols and Guaraldi's contemporary jazz; and the message that Christmas is really about the joyful miracle of Jesus' birth.

People who have seen this cartoon a dozen times or more probably recall the rest of the Peanuts characters as strongly as they do Charlie Brown. There's a repeated scene where 10 of the kids are practicing on stage, cutting loose to jazz piano. Every character has their own highly distinctive dance. Snoopy is pretending to play an electric guitar, in a characterization which wasn't repeated in later Peanuts specials.

The Christmas miracle comes when the cast of the pageant notices Charlie Brown's tree on Schroeder's piano, bent over with the weight of one ornament. They feel the same empathy for the tree that Charlie Brown did when he and Linus saw it for sale. Then they realize that Charlie Brown is a lot like this tree they want to help.

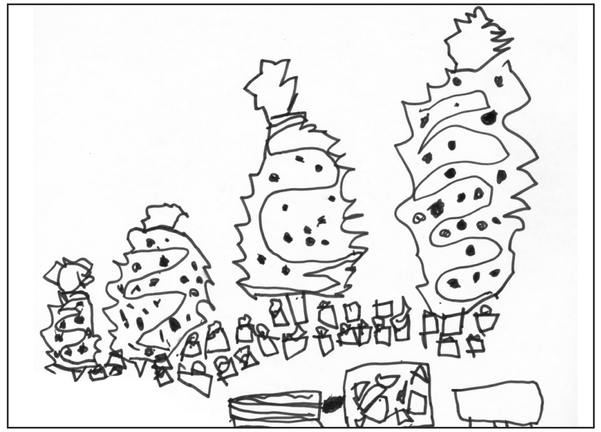
The special ends with the pageant cast working to transform the decrepid tree into something beautiful. They scavenge ornaments from Snoopy's first-prize decorated dog house and bring the tree to life. They ask Charlie Brown to join them, caroling Hark the Herald Angles Sing.

While the tree is the central symbol of *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, Linus steals the show. When Charlie Brown can't understand the meaning of Christmas, his younger friend makes a sincere attempt to explain. On the stage at the auditorium, he asks for the spotlight to be centred before he begins:

"And there were in the same country shepherds, abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them. And they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, 'Fear not! For, behold, I bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be to all my people. For unto you is born this day in the City of David, a Savior, which is Christ, the Lord.

"'And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.' And suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude on the Heavenly Host praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the Highest, and on Earth peace, and good will toward men.'

"That's what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown," said Linus.



Holden Franey, Metcalfe Public School, Grade 1



Season's Greetings

Many thanks and Merry Christmas to you and yours!

Harry, Iena & Staff

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PEACE ON EARTH



It may be cold outside, but our hearts are warmed by thoughts of the many good people we've had the privilege to meet and serve.
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From our home to yours

May the meaning of Christmas be deeper, its friendships stronger, and its hopes brighter as you and your loved ones enjoy the magic of the holiday season. It's been a privilege and a pleasure serving you this past year. If I can be of any assistance in the coming year, please call.

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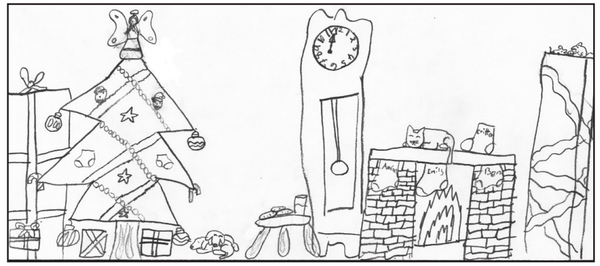

Emily, Winchester Public School, Grade 4

Celebrating Christmas around the world

Christmas has been celebrated in Canada since the early 1800s. Obviously, it was far more of a religious event than the commercial affair it is today. But we haven't lost all our past traditions. People continue to enjoy decorating their homes with Christmas trees, garlands, candles and lights. We all dream of having a white Christmas and many of us will enjoy a special dinner of turkey, potatoes and cranberry sauce.

In China, there are few Christian churches, but those who belong to this religion enthusiastically travel great distances to their nearest church on Christmas night, where they are regaled with Christmas trees and decorations. Exchanging cards and gifts, however, is generally reserved for the wealthy.

In Australia, Christmas is celebrated on December 25, but because of their geographical location, Aussies certainly aren't dreaming of a white Christmas—it falls smack dab in the middle of their summer season! That means Christmas often coincides with summer vacation and many families celebrate Christmas on the beach with a picnic or with a barbecue by the pool.

No one celebrates Christmas like the Mexicans. Their festivities officially start nine days before December 25. Homes are richly decorated and family and friends come by to visit. The piñata is a particularly favourite holiday game.

In Poland, people fast on Christmas Eve. Once the sun has set, straw is placed under the table to depict the manger scene. Children place their letters addressed to the Three Kings on the windowsill which include a list of gifts they would like get for Christmas.

It Must Be Christmas

There's a special feeling of cheer in the air which can only mean one thing: Christmas is almost here! In the spirit of the season, we extend best wishes for a happy, healthy season.

On behalf of the Management and Staff



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A MESSAGE OF THANKS

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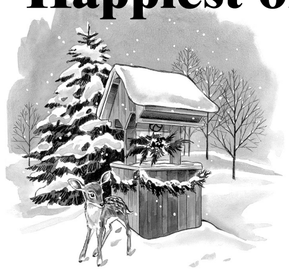
WISHING YOU THE Happiest of Holidays



You've helped make this past year everything we wished it would be. Thank you for your generous support.

from Glen & Heather Whitteker and the staff at:

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Warmest Holiday Greetings



To our special friends and customers:
May peace and happiness be yours this holiday season.

Thanks for your continued patronage.

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Reduce holiday-time stress: get back into the spirit of the season

The holidays are supposed to be the most wonderful time of the year according to the lyrics of one seasonal tune. But with the stress of shopping, holiday parties, guests and more it may seem far from wonderful.

One of the best ways to reduce stress is planning. A month or two before the holiday rush, write a list of everything you need to do during the holiday season — shopping, gift wrapping, cooking, etc. Then, write it all up on a calendar. Pencil in parties, shopping, cleaning, baking and other tasks and activities. Being organized makes things seem less crazy.

Now may be the time to reassess family traditions. You don't always have to go to Aunt Sue's for the holidays. Don't be afraid to eliminate activities that aren't family favorites. Maybe you can tour local holiday decorations or take a ski trip as a family instead.

Another way to reduce stress is to limit how much you'll spend on gifts and who will get them. 'Tis the season to give, but you don't have to give to everyone, with everything you've earned and all your time too. Instead of giving a gift to each relative, suggest that everyone be given a name of someone to buy a gift for at a set amount. Or, suggest a grab bag where everyone contributes a generic gift of, say, $20. Toss presents into a bag, have everyone "grab" into the bag for a gift. Another idea is to look for gifts that an entire family can enjoy together like a board game.

With the holiday season always comes guests. Don't put all the prepping burden on yourself — delegate household cleaning or cooking to family members. If you can afford it, hire a cleaning service during the holidays. That way, someone else can worry about mopping the floors, dusting the furniture and keeping the mirrors streak-free.

If you can, try to take a day or two off from work before the holidays. It will give you time to pack for a trip, cook for a party, clean the house or shop for gifts. Or, leave the kids with a sitter if that will help you get everything done.

Holiday parties reap tables and trays of treats, sauce-laden foods, not to mention calorie-filled alcoholic beverages. Don't overindulge to soothe your stress. Eating may temporarily cure the bluesm, but you'll spend the new year at the gym, exercising off those extra pounds.

Most of all, make time to relax. Sit down with a cup of hot cocoa. Bake some cookies with your family. Play a game or watch a video together. Take the kids to the ice skating rink. Get a massage, facial or manicure to relieve stress. Whatever you do, remember: The mall will be there tomorrow.



Colleen S., Winchester Public School, Grade 6

GIFTS of the Season

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Country Holiday Greetings
We wish all our neighbors a beautiful season.

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It's A Winter Wonderland

May you and every member of your family enjoy a season of joy and serenity.

Merry Christmas

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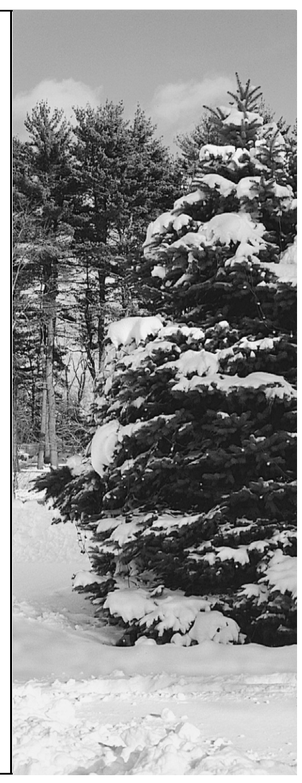


Wonders of winter solstice

It may seem like work or school flies on December 22, 2003. And it will — sort of. That day marks the winter solstice in the Northern Hemisphere. Take this quiz to see how much you know.

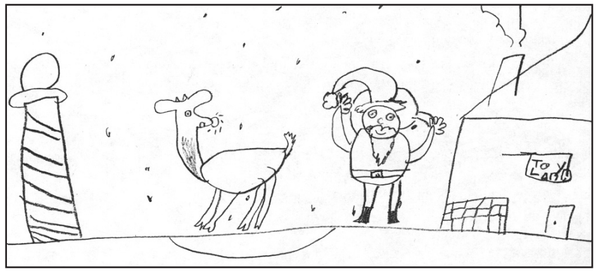
1. What is winter solstice?
2. What causes seasons?
3. What was the Roman festival of Saturnalia?
4. What tradition came from the Scandinavian's winter solstice festival called Jiuleis?
5. What ancient ruin was built to honor the solstice?
6. Many Christmas traditions come from Pagan winter solstice traditions. What custom involves giving presents?
7. When it's winter solstice in the Northern hemisphere, what is happening in the southern hemisphere?
8. What does the word solstice mean?
9. How did the ancient Greeks observe the winter solstice?
10. The winter solstice in 1999 was unique. Why so?

ANSWERS

1. Winter solstice is when the hemisphere is leaning farthest away from the sun. That's why daylight is the shortest this day.
2. They are caused by the rotation of the earth. Earth is tilted away from the sun during the northern hemisphere's winter, which is why the days are shorter.
3. It was a festival that honored winter solstice where servants ate with their masters. Schools were closed, prisoners were not executed and people paraded around the streets with black faces or masks.
4. The burning of the Yule log comes from here. Norse men would burn the log to repel dark and cold. The wood was thought to bring good luck to each home.
5. Newgrange in eastern Ireland was built to honor the solstice. It is one acre and has a 60 foot entranceway. It dates about to 3,300 BCE, making it one of the oldest structures in the world.
6. Romans gave their children earthenware (sigillaria), rings and seals to celebrate Sigillaria.
7. They are celebrating the summer solstice. At that time, night is at its shortest and daytime is at its longest.
8. It comes from two Latin words — "sol," which means sun, and "sistere" which means to cause to stand still.
9. Their winter solstice ritual was called Lenaea, the Festival of the Wild Women. A man representing the harvest god Dionysos was torn to pieces and eaten by a gang of women. Then, Dionysos was reborn as a baby. By classical times, the human sacrifice was replaced by the killing of a goat and the women became funeral mourners and watchers of the birth.
10. That year the solstice, full moon and lunar perigee happened on the same date. (Perigee means that the moon's orbit is closet to earth). Here, the moon was full and at its maximum size. The last time that something like this happened was 1866.



Mackenzie Allison, St. Mary, Chesterville, Grade 4



Carlee Coburn, Inkerman Public School, Grade 1

May Christmas fill your home with Joy

We appreciate the gift of your patronage and look forward to seeing you in the new year.

Sincerely,
Sandra and Richard Dym
and Santa's Helpers
Claire, Sharon, Sandra, Patricia and Cindy

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Blessings on Christmas

May you and yours share much love, and be guided by the light of this holy time, as you reflect upon the true, beloved meaning of Christmas.

Thank you for your past patronage and we look forward to serving you in the New Year.

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In Anticipation of a Joyous Holiday

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Victoria Richard of Metcalfe selects some evergreens for her craft.

Home school holiday craft

The Osgoode and District Home Educators group took a field trip to the Osgoode Township Museum in Vernon on Dec. 3. Part of their afternoon was dedicated to making Christmas ornaments with items found in nature and other bits and pieces that a pioneer family might have had access to. Ben Mussell (left) and Stephen Sawatzky work on their homemade Christmas decorations at the Osgoode Township Museum. *Press Photos – James*



Greetings FROM HOLMESDALE FARM

Happy Holidays

from

A & T Service

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Thanks for your continued support and Merry Christmas





Have a Fun-Filled Holiday!

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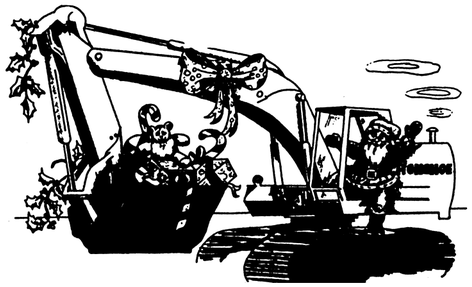
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year



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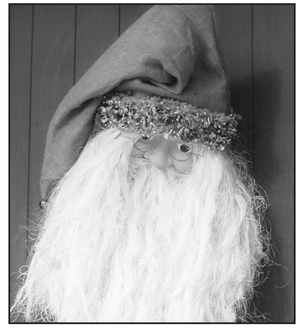
From St. Nicholas to Santa Claus

When the bishop of the town of Myra in Asia Minor—which is now known as Turkey—died at the age of 40 on December 6, 310 A.D., Santa Claus was nothing but a very far-off idea. Known for his overwhelming generosity, this bishop became the patron saint of small children and later the patron saint of pupils as well. This bishop is Saint Nicholas.

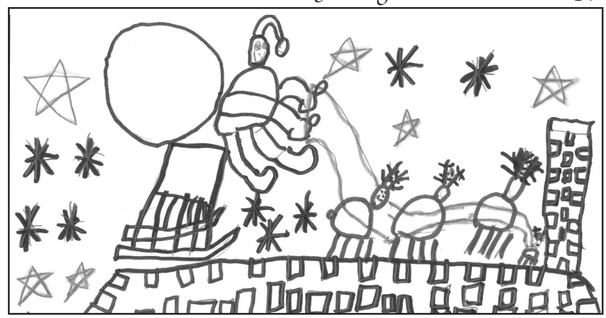
The feast of Saint Nicholas was abolished in the 16th century but young Dutch children continued to be visited by "Sinterklaas" every December 6 in the middle of the night. As Dutch families started migrating to the United States, they brought their custom of celebrating their version of Saint Nicholas with them. By the end of the 17th century, this Dutch tradition had become a widely accepted custom.

Sinterklaas—or Saint Nicholas—was depicted as a generous old man with a long white beard, dressed in religious robes or a long hooded cloak. He was also a strong symbol of morality. As we tell our children today, Santa brings presents for those who have behaved and nothing for those who have not.

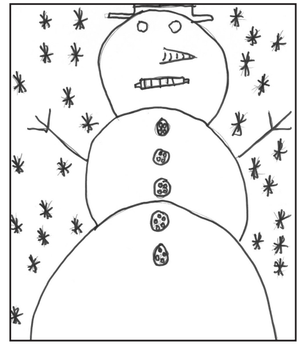
This generous gift-giver only got his eight reindeer in 1823—thanks to a tale written by Clement Clarke Moore entitled, A Visit From St. Nicholas. In 1860, Thomas Nast, the famous cartoonist for Harper's Illustrated Weekly, a New-York based newspaper, depicted Santa as we know him today, wearing his red costume with the white fur trim and wide black leather belt. Twenty-five years later, in 1885, Nast decided to establish Santa at the North Pole. Thanks to a world map, children could follow Santa's trek from the North Pole to the United States.



Saint Nicholas is depicted as a generous old man with a long white beard dressed in religious robes or a long hooded cloak.



Kurtis Holmes, Grade 2, Nationview Public School



Megan Dudley, Grade 5, Inkerman Public School



Brittani Fawcett, Grade 5, Inkerman Public School

Have A Glowing Season!



As we throw another Yule log on the fire, our thoughts are with the many fine folk we've had the privilege to know and serve this past year.

May contentment and joy warm your heart this holiday season.

Harbers Flame Centre & Masonry Inc.

Joy & Brian Harbers
RR3, Williamsburg 535-2301

Deck The Halls!

Wishing you all the trimmings of a beautiful holiday season.
Your presence has been the best present for us this year. Thanks!



C & H CONSTRUCTION
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Have a Joyous Season

We hope you make the most of the holidays with family, friends and festivities. May they bring you much happiness and contentment.

Thank you for allowing us to make the most of our business with your loyal support. We look forward to serving you in the New Year.

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Sinterklass visits Early Years Centre

WINCHESTER — The Early Years Centre in Winchester hosted a traditional Dutch Christmas party for youngsters on Dec. 5. They sang Dutch holiday songs and colored pictures to leave in wooden shoes as gifts for Sinterklaas, who came at the end of the party bearing presents for the good children. Carrots were also placed in the shoes as a treat for Sinterklaas' horse.

In the Dutch tradition, Sinterklaas, or St. Nicholas, comes from Spain to Holland to give out presents to good little boys and girls. In the weeks before the feast of St. Nicholas, Dec. 6, he travels on a white horse over the rooftops by night with Zwarte Piet (Black Peter), who enters the houses through the chimney to put little presents in the children's shoes. Sometimes the children put straw, carrots and water near the shoes for the horse.



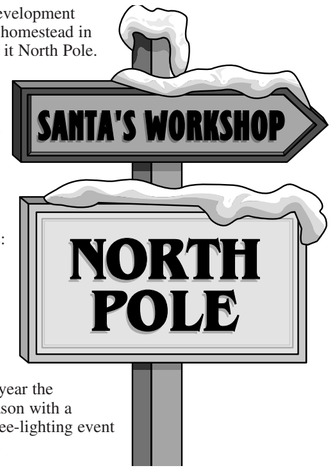
Wooden shoes were filled with drawings for Sinterklaas, and carrots for his horse, in the hopes that he would bring presents and candy.



Emily Scheepers sits on Sinterklaas' knee at the Winchester Early Years Centre on Dec. 5.

Did you know...?

In the 1940s, Dahl and Gaske Development Company bought the Bon Davis homestead in Alaska, subdivided it and named it North Pole. The name was selected to attract the toy industry to manufacture articles made in "North Pole." This endeavor failed to blossom, but North Pole has continued to grow, and interest continued to develop North Pole as a theme city, "where the spirit of Christmas lives year-round." Many streets bear holiday names: Santa Claus Lane, Snowman Lane, Kris Kringle, Mistletoe, Holiday Road, Saint Nicholas Drive, North Star Drive, Blitzen and Donner. The Santa Claus house, the "official" home of Santa Claus, greets all visitors who pass through the city. Each year the community starts the holiday season with a candle- lighting ceremony and tree-lighting event on the first Sunday in December.



Warm Wishes
All the best to you and yours this happy time of year.
We send our thanks out to all and wish you much good cheer!
Monast Backhoe & Haulage Service Ltd.
Chesterville 448-2856



Wishing you all the beauty of the holiday season and the best in the year to come. We appreciate your patronage and look forward to serving you in the future.
Happy holidays and thank you from all of us at
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Here's hoping your season is filled with fun and tradition.
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Thank you for your kindness and good will.
To all we wish a very merry Christmas season.
Russell Slaughter House Inc.
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Nutcrakers have long history

WINCHESTER — With their big chomping teeth, nutcrackers may look a little bit mean, but they have become a charming part of traditional holiday decor. The brightly painted figures often look like soldiers, but can be fashioned in many other variations and they come in all sizes.

The roots of the Christmas nutcracker as we know it stem from the Erzgebirge (Ore Mountains) area of Germany. The towns there are well-known for their woodworking handicrafts. In the 18th century, the term "nussknacker" appeared in the first dictionary of High German which was created by the Brothers Grimm, and was described as "often in form of a misshaped little man, in whose mouth the nut, by means of a lever or screw, is cracked open."

Some sources report that it was tradition to place a nutcracker in the window to keep one's family safe from evil spirits and danger. The first nutcrackers were made in the design of kings and soldiers. Apparently the artisans and townsfolk enjoyed the sight of these powerful figures working for them, cracking their nuts.

The nutcracker made its way to this part of the world in the hands of North American soldiers that had been stationed in Germany and purchased them as trinkets to bring home. Their popularity is almost surely a result of the Nutcracker Suite ballet, which made its North American debut in the mid-1940s.

Early nutcrackers were made to represent many different authority characterizations, including monks, police, and political leaders, to amuse people, but the king and soldier figures undoubtedly inspired the publication of E.T.A. Hoffmann's fairy tale *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King* in 1816. The story is about a sad little girl named Marie whose only love is a nutcracker doll.

French novelist Alexandre Dumas adapted the story in 1845, giving it a cheerier outlook and making it more suitable for children. In 1891 this adaptation was selected as the basis of a Russian ballet to be scored by Tchaikovsky.

The Nutcracker ballet opened in St. Petersburg on Dec. 17, 1892 and was not a huge success. It was never performed outside of Russia until 1934, when it appeared in London, England. It is now one of the world's most popular ballets, seen by millions during the Christmas season.

The ballet tells story of a young girl named Clara. Her godfather, Drosselmeier, gives her a nutcracker doll at a family party on Christmas Eve. After everyone has left and the family is asleep, Clara sneaks downstairs to look at the nutcracker doll again.

She falls asleep and drifts into a dream where she has shrunk down to the size of the nutcracker and her brother's toy soldiers. She is surrounded by mice and the Mouse King appears and tries to kidnap her. The soldiers and the nutcracker come alive and rescue her. The nutcracker defeats the Mouse King in battle.

The nutcracker prince takes Clara to his kingdom. The journey takes them through the land of the Snow Queen and to Candyland where they are met by the Sugar Plum Fairy. Clara doesn't want to leave her princely nutcracker, but she wakes up Christmas morning by the Christmas tree in her normal size with her nutcracker doll.

The artisan who is thought of as the father of the commercially produced nutcracker is Wilhelm Füchtner (1844-1923). He handcrafted multiple nutcrackers of the same design in 1872. Other woodworkers in the Erzgebirge area soon followed his lead. Two famous nutcracker companies that have continued the tradition to this day are Steinbach and Christian Ulbricht. Each manufacturer has distinctive style variations and their nutcrackers are very collectable, often commanding premium prices.



The tradition of nutcrackers hails from Germany. Geggie's Home Hardware has a variety of the toothy figures for sale. *Press Photo – James*

HOPE IT'S A Hit!
MERRY CHRISTMAS 2003
Wishing you a Christmas that's a perfect '10'.
This past year has been great fun, thanks to you!
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Dave & Susan Bird

Greetings of the Season



Wishing you an old-fashioned holiday filled with memories you'll treasure always. Many thanks for your loyal patronage.
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GEGGIE'S
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Bumper-to-bumper gifts

For some people, their vehicle is like a second home. They are always on the road—whether it is for work or for fun. In fact, they almost seem to live in their car. Why not give them something that you'll know they'll love? We're talking about gifts to decorate or improve their mobile "home" of course!

In terms of practical gifts, you can choose one of the many accessories that help make it easier to transport items. Depending on the needs of the person you are buying for, you could opt for a cage or screen used to transport pets. For an adventurer, how about a bike rack, ski rack or roof-mounted luggage carrier? There are even interior storage accessories that will increase the driving pleasure of the road-trip lovers on your gift list.

Or perhaps you prefer to give the car enthusiast in your life a gift that will improve the appearance of his or her vehicle? Rugs, cushions, seat slip covers, pedal covers and pant savers are all great ideas.

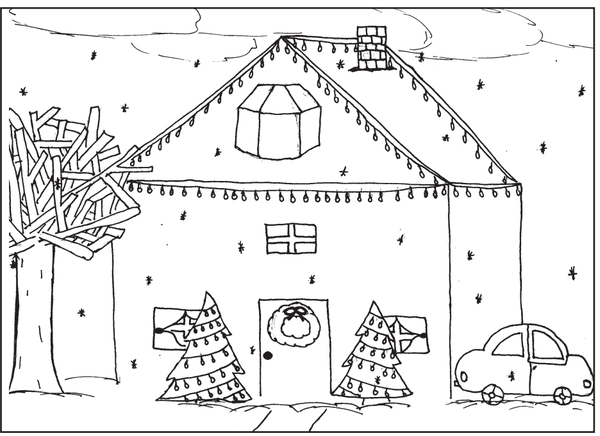
Then there are all those little useful and interesting items that hardcore drivers love: tachometer, compass, cell phone holder, clock, windshield protector, portable CD holder, travel mug, ice scraper, collapsible shovel, first aid kit, repair and cleaning kits… you just need to go to your local car accessories store to see how endless this list really is. Last but not least, how about a personalized license plate or bumper sticker?



Some people almost live in their car. Buy them something they can enjoy while spending time in their "mobile" home!



Megan Gruich, Grade 4, St. Mary's, Chesterville



Katie LeClairveiw, Grade 7, Nationview Public School



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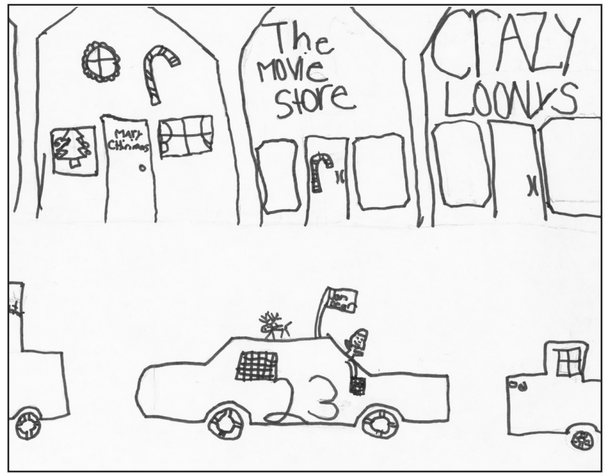

Jessica Van Winden, Grade 4, Inkerman Public School

Gifts for the new parents

New parents centre their entire lives around their baby; it's only natural, after all. Forget dinners and movies, going out becomes the equivalent of shopping at toy stores and baby clothing boutiques. Without wanting to take anything away from the fun of spoiling your family's new treasure, we'd like to remind you that new parents deserve a special treat now and again, too. And what better time to spoil them than at Christmas!

Let's start with Mom. While being pregnant is extremely glamorous and carefree (if only!), it can also do quite a number on a woman's body. It's time to treat her feet! Did you know that there are beauty products designed specifically for pregnant and nursing women? These include skin toning lotions, oil for varicose veins, revitalizing gels for heavy legs, ointments for breasts and bath products to soothe the body and mind. A gift certificate for a relaxing massage or a visit to the hairdresser will greatly help any new mom who's dealing with post-partum.



There are also a wealth of accessories that will help new parents cope with the high demands of caring for an infant: playpens, baby monitors, jolly jumpers, strollers, car seats, bicycle baby seats and infant carriers. They all make excellent gifts.

Even a little bit of help will be greatly appreciated. No new parent will turn down an opportunity to take a nap while you baby-sit or cook dinner while the baby is sleeping! When you're a new parent, you never have enough time—or get enough sleep!

Shopping tip

Be "e-wise" when doing your holiday shopping online. Safeguard your personal information and Internet passwords. Paying by credit card can provide you certain legal protections if the merchandise is not received. Also, be sure to consider taxes, shipping costs and return or cancellation policies before making a purchase.

Just In The Nick Of Time!

Before Santa arrives we wanted to send out best wishes and thanks from our house to yours. Merry Christmas!



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Christmas stories

• continued from previous page

Christmas
by Kristyn Zandbergen

Every year we have Christmas at my house with my Grandma and Grandpa Tibben and my Grandma and Grandpa Zandbergen and my aunts and uncles and cousins.

Every Christmas I make a snow fort and a snowman. Last year I went sledding down a big slippery hill at Upper Canada Village. It was so slippery I almost ran into a tree. It was like ice.

My uncle Stan, and my cousins Mark and Brian Tibben were there too. My brother lost his magic carpet because it was so windy.

Only 364 days to go!
by Steven Adema

Christmas is always a lot of fun. Around Christmas time we will not have the usual kind of Sunday services.

There are the special readings, neat services, instrument playing from some people and all the little kids singing Silent Night, Holy Night, or Away in a Manger; but, the best is when we come back come from church and have our lunch with all the relatives who have come over.

Usually we will have mashed potatoes with gravy and ham. When we are done, all the boys will go on the hockey rink, if it is ready by then, and play hockey. Even though all this is really great, when it is over you have to wait another 365 days until we celebrate it again.

My Christmas!
by Tracy Byker

Last year's Christmas was the one I will never forget! Everything was so much fun. And everyone is so joyful.The gifts are nice, but I love to go to church and sing Christmas songs about the baby Lord Jesus, seeing all kinds of different lights at night, and just feeling so joyful about everything!

We have a big family Christmas with all my aunts, uncles, grandparents and cousins. It is so exciting being with all your family and talking with others. We pull names and then buy a gift for the person that we pick. It is delightful!

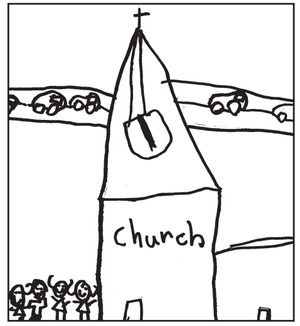
Usually my church has a candle light service. Anyone is invited who would like to come. We sing lots of different Christmas songs and have Bible readings. I love Christmas!

My favorite Christmas
by Ben Noort

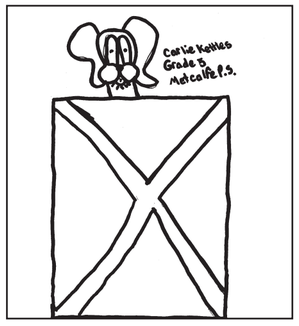
My favorite Christmas was two years ago. We got a second-hand snowmobile. It was the best! We put about a thousand kilometers on it. We got a GT with an old-fashioned sled and then a crazy carpet.

The crazy carpet was the best! You slid all over. When you turned you could almost touch the other sled. You had to hang on for dear life. You always fell off in a few minutes.

I also got an awesome book about the U.S. Civil War, a movie and some mitts. I loved that snowy Christmas!



Brittany Beeler, Grade 2
St. Mary's, Chesterville



Carlie Kettles, Grade 5
Metcalfe Public School



Mason B, Grade 3, St. Mary's, Chesterville

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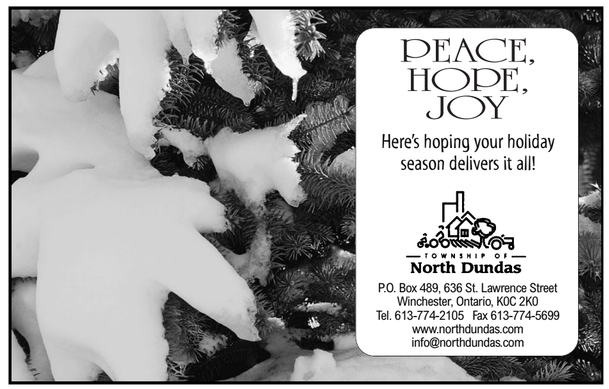

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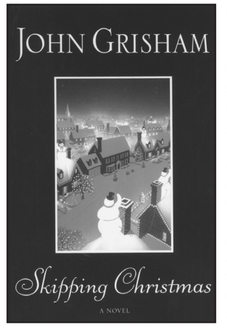
Skipping Christmas makes light of holiday stress

by Bonnie James
Press staff

WINCHESTER – John Grisham is well known for his legal thrillers, several of which have been made into films with characters played by high-wattage movie stars. He has been branching out with his writing over the past several years and *Skipping Christmas,* written in 2001, is one of those branches, and it's a strong one.



Luther and Nora Krank live in the 'burbs. Their only daughter, Blair, is headed to Peru with the Peace Corp and won't be home for the holidays. Without her around, the Kranks decide to skip Christmas. They decide not to participate in their street's effort to win the annual neighborhood decorating and Christmas spirit contest. They decide not to attend Luther's office party, not to host their own traditional Christmas Eve bash, not to have a tree, and not even to purchase fruitcakes from the local firemen.

There are consequences for such drastic actions and that is what drives the plot of this novel. It's a comedic look at middle-class suburban Christmas traditions and how the stress of the season can affect one's behavior. It's humorous, without being laugh-out-loud funny.

The main characters are well-drawn and fleshed out. You will share Luther's smugness at skipping all these long-standing rituals and feel the panic when things go wrong. Some of the supplementary characters feel a little one dimensional, however.

The squabbles and undercurrents of neighbor relations start out as convincing, but get taken to extremes that one would not expect in real life. The ending may be a touch saccharine for some, but it should serve to help put you, or keep you, in the holiday spirit.

Skipping Christmas is a nice light holiday read, and at 177 pages it won't tax your short supply of free time too much. It could be finished within a few sittings, or stretched out as bedtime reading during the often stressful lead-up to Christmas. The subject matter is nice and fluffy, nothing too trying to wrap your mind around.

Due to its holiday subject matter, *Skipping Christmas* will hold its popularity over time, making it a good title to pass around to your friends over the next several years. As a nod to its continuous strong sales, a soft cover edition has not been published (to this reviewer's knowledge). It's not good enough to recommend purchasing the pricey hardcover for yourself, but is one to add to your Christmas list. And it would make a great present for readers who enjoy humor and a light storytelling style.

Other holiday-themed reads

The Christmas Shoes by Donna VanLiere, 2001
Christmas in Harmony by Philip Gulley, 2002
The Christmas Box by Richard Paul Evans, 1995
The Best Christmas Pageant Ever by Barbara Robinson, 1988
A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens



Amy Grotenhuis, Senior Kindergarten, Timothy Christian

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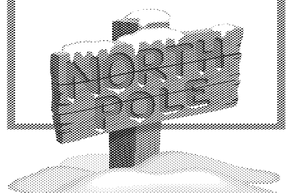

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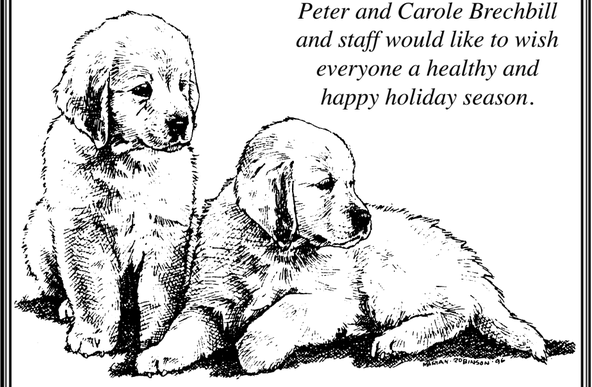
Peter and Carole Brechbill and staff would like to wish everyone a healthy and happy holiday season.



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A Christmas village under the tree

There's a bit of mystery surrounding the origins of placing miniature villages under the Christmas tree. Some say this custom originated in the santon era of the 18th century.

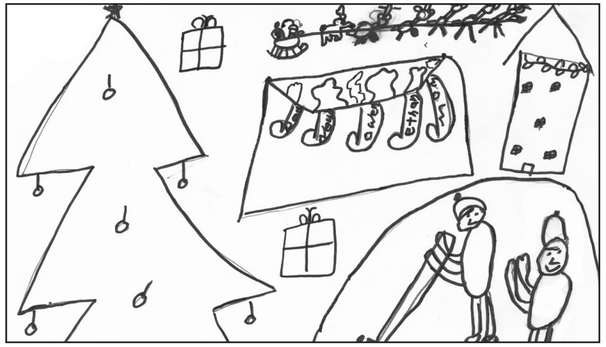
When Moravians started immigrating to the United States around 1741, they brought with them a tradition of decorating the Christmas nativity scene. This involved adding dozens—even hundreds—of decorative elements to the manger scene to create magnificent imaginary landscapes. Figurines of people, homes, waterfalls, bridges, fences, fountains and gardens were used to create enchanting villages.



By the beginning of the 20th century, miniature buildings were being mass-produced in Canada. By 1920, German manufacturers started selling their wares in North America, followed by Japanese manufacturers in the 1930s. In the last few years, miniature villages have regained their popularity and are showing up in increasing numbers under many Canadian Christmas trees.

An indispensable decoration, the skirt that decorates the foot of the tree first showed up around 1913. Originally, these skirts were used to protect the floor from wax dripping off the candles that decorated the tree. The first skirts used depicted Santa in his sleigh pulled by eight reindeer.

In Canada, cotton batting was an obvious first choice for a tree skirt since it simulated the look of freshly fallen snow—a sight we know all too well! By 1930, crepe paper decorated as stone and brick replaced cotton batting. To fast forward to today you have to jump way back in time because miniature villages have once again reclaimed their rightful place under the Christmas tree!



Nevin Guy, Grade 3, Nationview Public School



Leah Banfield, Grade 1, Winchester Public School

Students share what makes them love Christmas

WILLIAMSBURG — The Grade 8 class at Timothy Christian School, Williamsburg was asked this year to write a story about Christmas. Below is a selection from what the students produced.

My favorite Christmas
by Andrew deJong

A couple of years ago on Christmas Eve, Santa Claus came to my house. We were all so excited until we found out that it was actually my uncle. Anyway, we were all so excited. He brought me a toy tractor set, and my brother also got one.

He asked us our names and said to my sister, "So you must be Brigitte!"

And she said, "I not Brigitte. I scared."

We were so happy with what we got. I still have some of the toys that I got that Christmas. That is the Christmas I will always remember.

The Christmas my brother got lost
by Christina DeSchiffart

One Christmas, my family and I decided to go skating on the canal. We went with my parents, friends and their family. We went skating and my brother Paul decided to go ahead. At the end he thought that we were going to look at the ice sculptures so he went there.

We decided though, that we would go to Winterlude. Then when we were taking off our skates we noticed that Paul wasn't there. So my dad and his friend went skating around looking for him. It was around 5 pm so the kids (including me) went home with some people that my parents knew.

My parents and their friends kept looking for him but couldn't find him. They asked the patrol people on the ice and they said they had found a lost boy and he was on the other side of the canal. So my parents and their friends skated to the other end of the canal and asked the people there.

They said that they had brought him to the end of the canal. So my parents finally got him and came to get us. By then it was around 8 pm so we did not get to go to Winterlude. Instead we had pizza at the people's house and then went home. It was fun though.

Christmas
by Jenny Dentz

My favorite holiday is Christmas. It reminds me of the wonderful things God does for us. It's the time of year everyone is generous and kind to each other.

One of my favorite things I love about Christmas is the church service on Christmas morning. Everyone is so joyful and is praising God for the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We need to remember the true meaning of Christmas and not get caught up in all the decorations and presents. Christmas is a time to spend time with your friends and family. It is also a time to rejoice because Christmas is the day that God sent us His son.

Things that make Christmas a special time for me
by Julie Van't Foort

Christmas is a season of joy among all people. For some it is about the presents and the decorations. For me it is a season to see family members I never get to see and to remember the coming of our savior, Jesus Christ.

During this season I enjoy attending Christmas services and other Christmas events. One of my favorite services is the Christmas Eve candlelight service. Everyone has a candle, and they give a dull light to the sanctuary of the church. The candles remind me that Jesus was the light of the world.

I love to hear the Christmas story in many ways, such as through plays, readings, and the singing of songs. All these things give me a larger perspective of the Christmas story. Even weeks before Christmas, my church begins to light candles. There are five candles and each has a specific meaning in the Christmas story. All these things come together to make my Christmas special.

My Christmases through the years
by Kayla Kooistra

On Christmas my family gets together. Every other year we meet at either my house or my aunt's house in Toronto, or my aunt's house near South Mountain. Last year it was at my house and this year it is going to be at my aunt, uncle and cousin's house in Toronto.

My oldest sister, Megan, is coming home from university. Also, some of my cousins are gone to college and universities too, so they will be coming home. These, by the way, are my relatives from my mom's side. It is always lots of fun.

We also have a get-together with my relatives from my dad's side. I have cousins that come from Toronto with their parents. But this Christmas gathering is always held at my grandma and grandpa's house. My aunt and uncle live just down the road from me and my grandparents live just a couple houses down from me. So, really, no one has to travel much.

My Christmases from every year are eventful, yet simple. We go to church and hear the wonderful Christmas story year after year, and then just spend time together. It's fun, but like I said, simple.

We use the time to catch up with each other's lives. We sometimes remember other Christmases and of course, my grandparents will mention, as they always do, that their grandchildren are getting so big and learning so much. For this, they mention that they are thankful.

I am also thankful, but hey, this is Christmas, not Thanksgiving! And, of course, we open presents. Anyway, overall, my Christmases are great and are wonderful events to remember!

• continued on next page



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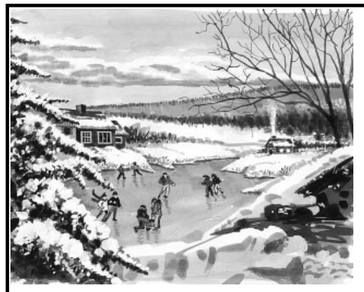

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Save a wetland this holiday season

WINCHESTER — Step away from the sock aisle at the department store and don't bother slipping another gift certificate in a card. This holiday season, think about a gift of conservation for the people in your life who love the outdoors.

Invest in gift memberships to Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) and you join 150,000 DUC supporters like the Farnsworth family of Vauxhall, Alberta.

The family is alarmed that up to 70 per cent of Canada's wetlands have disappeared. Clay Farnsworth, a RCMP constable, joined DUC 11 years ago. An avid sportsman growing up, he regards his DUC membership as an opportunity to give back to nature by conserving vital habitat.

"My involvement in DUC is one of those things that goes hand in hand — you take and you give back," Farnsworth says. He knows that his membership conserves wetlands that provide wildlife habitat and improve water quality for people. Wetlands are also destinations for all kinds of outdoor enjoyment and, as a result, DUC enjoys the support of hunters and non-hunters.

"Give me a canoe on a marsh and I'm happy," Farnsworth says.

He and 8,000 more Canadians take their commitment to DUC one step farther by becoming fundraising volunteers. Farnsworth is good at recruitment too. His wife, Joe-Anne, and their two daughters, volunteer with him at the Vauxhall Banquet.

Over 800 DUC fundraising events are held every year in towns and cities across Canada. DUC's on-the-ground approach to conservation and hands-on volunteering appeals to the Farnsworths who are a "get down to business and fun" kind of family.

"You actually see what the money you're raising is doing," Farnsworth says. Ninety cents of every dollar donated to DUC is invested directly in habitat conservation, research and public education. "You can drive out and you can see a DUC project — and see the benefits down the road. These projects are there forever. They will benefit our children down the road and our children's children."

Ducks Unlimited Canada
CANADA'S CONSERVATION COMPANY

Bettylou Christenson and her husband, Grant, in Creston, British Columbia, are sharing their love for the outdoors with all five of their grandchildren with gift memberships in DUC's youth education program called Greenwing. Ranging in age from five to 12, the Christenson grandkids are Legacy Greenwing members meaning that their membership is secure until they reach age 21.

"Hopefully this will encourage them to get involved as DUC committee members down the road," says Bettylou Christenson. She has been involved with DUC for 20 years. As a district volunteer fundraising chair with DUC, she helps out with fundraising events in her area.

"It gives you a good feeling to see what we've done as a team," Christenson says. "When another project takes place, you think of all these people who have worked so hard. It's very worthwhile."

Tom Cybolsky of Iroquois Falls, Ont., thinks DUC is so worthwhile that he helped start the town's first DUC fundraising event 15 years ago.



Giving the gift of a DUC membership this Christmas will help conserve wetlands for wildlife like the mallard and for people as well. Wetlands are nature's water filter.

"A lot of people don't realize the purpose and function of Ducks Unlimited Canada and they don't realize there is work going on in their own back yard," Cybolsky says. DUC projects are often field trip destinations that teach students about the need to conserve. Cybolsky and his wife Pam are sharing the wonder of wetlands by giving gift DUC memberships to their nieces and nephews.

"It's nice to see people get excited about conservation," he adds.

DUC is Canada's leading, private, non-profit, wetland conservation organization. For more than 65 years, DUC has conserved, restored and managed wetlands and associated habitats for North America's waterfowl. These habitats, nature's water filters, also benefit other wildlife and people. Over 6,800 wetland conservation projects have been completed with the contributions of DUC's members and other supporters.

Sign someone up as a DUC member for the holidays for only $25. A DUC membership is a gift that can be enjoyed year round, and the only returns you'll see are the wildlife that come back to DUC's wetland projects every spring!

Call 1-866-384-DUCK (3825) to purchase a gift membership, or visit www.ducks.ca for more information.

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The newsroom ginger-kids in action as the house takes shape.

Gingerbread is for everyone

by Bonnie James
Press staff

WINCHESTER – It's a strange custom when you think about it, building a house out of gingerbread. And what it has to do with Christmas, we're not exactly sure. However, it seemed like an enjoyable little project for the *Press* newsroom on the Friday afternoon before the Parade of Lights.

My mom bakes all the pieces for the family gingerbread house from scratch, but though editor Chris Zabel asked nearly everyone in the office, he couldn't find anyone that ambitious. We settled for an all-in-one gingerbread house kit, which was purchased at Andy's Foodland in Winchester, for the reasonable price of $12.99.



Our kit came with everything needed for gingerbread construction: pre-baked walls, roof, and chimney, icing sugar, candy for decorating, and a convenient plastic display tray. "Bonus ginger-tree, ginger-kid, and ginger-snowman," the package announced. "That's just the thing," said Zabel.

The gingerbread house has a German heritage, as evidenced by the German fairy tale Hansel and Gretel. Shaped and decorated gingerbread was popular at autumn fairs and Christmas markets in northern Europe as far back as the eleventh century. By the eighteenth century, bakers had developed their art to such an extent that English speakers began using the phrase "gingerbread work" to refer to intricately carved wooden trim on houses.

In the *Press* office, the word was out that Friday was construction day. Resident Grinch Allen Van Bridger thought the idea foolhardy and claimed he wouldn't participate. As the kit sat on a desk in the newsroom throughout the week, every other single staff member stopped to have a close look.

Friday came and as the day wore on the question became more frequent, "When are you building your house?" they wanted to know.

Finally, in the late afternoon we opened the package and began. Within moments we were in the midst of raising walls, followed by the roof. Van Bridger circled with a camera, claiming to document the event, and offering advice. Soon, however, the camera was lying on the desk, he had two hands keeping the roof from sliding off, and was barking out directions. "Another line along here!" he snapped at the poor lass holding the icing dispenser (namely me).

"I wouldn't hire either one of you as contractors," he stated as he held the chimney in place.

After the building seemed stable, Van Bridger headed back to his camera. The candy for the house seemed to be mysteriously dwindling before we even got started adding it to our masterpiece. Zabel hit the convenience store to search out more decorative candy and returned with rope licorice and gummy bears. "Gummy bears?" I asked incredulously. "Sure, why not?" he retorted. The decoration phase was under way.

While some people are pleased by symmetry, others like to let their creativity run wild. Our house turned out to have color-coded gumdrops evenly spaced along the edges of the roof, a mish-mash of bubble gum balls sprouting from the yard, and a gummy bear in every window.

Building and decorating our gingerbread house didn't take much more than an hour, including clean up. We do recommend that you buy extra candy, and be extra careful not to make the icing too thin (the thicker the better). We certainly felt that we got our money's worth in entertainment. It's an easy activity that adults, kids, and even a sweet-toothed Grinch can enjoy. Maybe next year we'll build a village.

Whatever's on your program this holiday season, we hope it's filled with harmony and joy. We really appreciate your doing business with us and look forward to seeing you in the New Year.
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Merry Christmas, From the Whole Gang!
Just in the 'nick' of time, we're delivering our best wishes to all our patrons.
The CountryBoy The Country Attic The CountryGirl The Country Sole
The CountryBoy The CountryGirl The Country Attic The Country Sole
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Front row, left to right - Bruce Kerr, Joanna Helmer, Juli Pilotte, Joanne Moran; back row, left to right - Carrie Hilborn, Lorna Kerr, Emily Geertsema, Shirley Stewart.

Yuletide Greetings
Our hearts are filled with gratitude as we wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Thank you for your support this year.
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The sky's the limit!

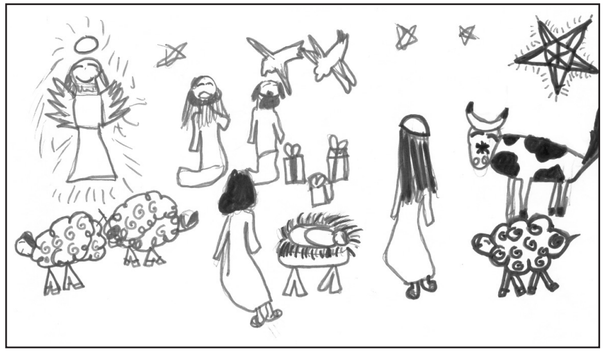
You can never be too old or too young to appreciate the beauty of a starry sky. Filled with treasures and mysteries, space has fascinated mankind for millennia. After all, didn't the Three Wise Men and shepherds follow the north star all the way to manger to witness Jesus's birth? Why not follow in their footsteps this Christmas and treat those you love to the beauty of the universe that surrounds us.

Anyone can become an amateur astronomer. It can quickly become a passionate hobby for young and old alike. The key is to resist buying the first telescope you see on sale at your local department store. In fact, you don't even need sophisticated equipment to search the stars. After all, the human eye is still the best standard viewing tool we have. Instead, start off by buying sky maps and books that will pique the curiosity of the person you are buying for. A rotating map of the sky that shows you where you can find certain stars according to the month and hour is also a great tool for any budding astronomer.

Those who want to go a bit further can splurge on a pair of binoculars. Those with a wide field of vision will help make spotting celestial bodies easier. 7X50 binoculars are most commonly used in astronomy because they are relatively light and affordable. Later on, when this interest becomes a real passion, you can invest in a quality telescope. Your best bet is to visit specialty stores. They are in the best position to help you find the right model.



Treat those around you this Christmas to a universe filled with beauty and mystery.



Chloe Preston, Grade 3, Nationview Public School

Merry Christmas



May you experience the season and all the joy, warmth and happiness it holds in store. Our warmest thoughts are with you on this holiday occasion, along with our thanks for your valued business.

Edie's House of Fashion

Morrisburg Village Plaza 543-2561



Season's Greetings

As snow is blanketing the ground,
We'd like to spread cheer all around
With a flurry of best wishes, too...
From all of us to all of you!

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MERRY CHRISTMAS, EVERYONE!

... And many thanks for your continued loyal patronage. Thank you for bringing us so much joy this year.

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As the holiday unfolds, we wish you a season of peace and love, health and prosperity, and all things beautiful and bright. You deserve it.

The Children's Aid Society of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry
La Société de l'aide à l'enfance des comtés unis de Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry 932-3986

A festive holiday table

Nothing says Christmas celebration like a lavish meal served on a festive table. After all, your dinner table reflects your warm welcome to others. How can you set a festive table that will leave your guests wide-eyed with wonder and amazement, but not require the skills of Martha Stewart? Here are a few tips that can help.

The easiest way is to simply buy everything. Stores today have everything you need—from gorgeous table runners to card holders. But if you are watching your budget and have some extra time on your hands, you can make many of your decorations yourself.

Don't have the imagination? No problem. Your local arts & crafts or department store will have all sorts of fabrics, materials and books that will show you how to create gorgeous holiday decorations, step-by-step.

A festive table doesn't have to be excessive or expensive. A few red candles wrapped in green and gold ribbon; wine glasses with mistletoe leaves wrapped around the stem; fir cones painted and decorated by your children—that's all it really takes!

Christmas lighting will also go a long way when it comes to creating a magical atmosphere. String miniature lights inside your home and add a few strategically-placed candles. If you buy a natural Christmas tree, cut off a few extra branches and decorate them. Set them in the centre of your dinner table and add a few Christmas ornaments. For a finishing touch, have your children draw Christmas images on small pieces of thick paper and use them as table cards.



There's nothing like candles and Christmas lighting to create a warm, magical atmosphere.



Heather Demers, Grade 1, Morewood Public School

Did you know?

Many legends exist about the origin of the Christmas tree. One is the story of Saint Boniface, an English monk who organized the Christian Church in France and Germany. One day, as he traveled about, he came upon a group of pagans gathered around a great oak tree about to sacrifice a child to the god Thor. To stop the sacrifice and save the child's life, Boniface felled the tree with one mighty blow of his fist. In its place grew a small fir tree. The saint told the people that the tiny fir was the Tree of Life and stood for the eternal life of Christ.



Merry Christmas

Celebrate with us the joy of giving and the warmth of sharing.

Rideau Auctions Inc.

Winchester 774-2735



Some things haven't changed much since the old days. Good friends, loving family and courteous neighbors like you are still what Christmas is all about. With appreciation and warm wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season.

from

Dukedale Farms
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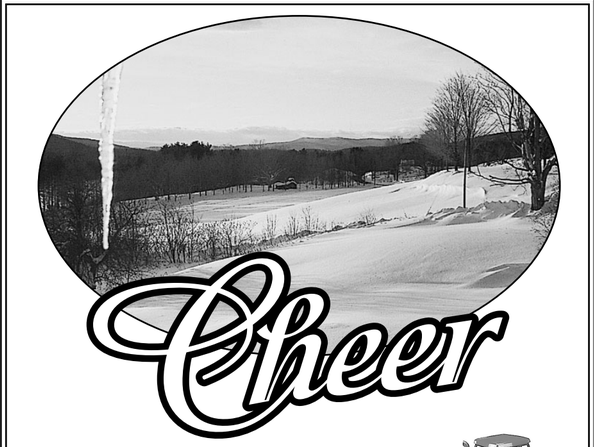
Christmas Is On The Way



Cheer

When winter spreads its gentle mantle of white over the countryside, everyone warms with the spirit of this happiest of seasons.

Happy holidays to all!



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Shepherd Talk

• continued from previous page

Christmas is indeed a time of giving and it is giving without the slightest hope of a return. This is the kind of giving that the Bible holds up as worthy and commendable. Saint John the Baptist, held by Christianity to be the messenger of Christ sent to make straight the path for Christ the King's coming, spoke of economic matters in his prophetic message to those who came to him. (St. Luke 3: 11-14) "Let the man who has two tunics share with him who has none; and let him who has food do likewise." To tax collectors: Be honest. To soldiers: "Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse anyone falsely, and be content with your wages."

For Saint John, and later for Jesus, there was no separation between politics, spirituality, economics, ethics, faith, or actions. All ingredients, like the elements of a recipe, are necessary to have the desired result — an economy that is efficient at more than creating wealth in great abundance. One that is efficient at fairly sharing what is created.

Our mainstream economic theorists left such concerns out of the theoretical equation at the outset of economics as a social science. They have to be re-integrated if the issue of a fair distribution of the nation's, and indeed the world's, wealth and income is to be achieved.

The effects of not only the demand and supply in the arena of the market, but also the values, beliefs, and preferences of the populace need to be measured and included in the mix of considerations. Fair play in the economy is attended by social stability, and a healthy citizenry keeps health care costs down. There are economic fringe benefits to be had from putting Christian tenets into action.

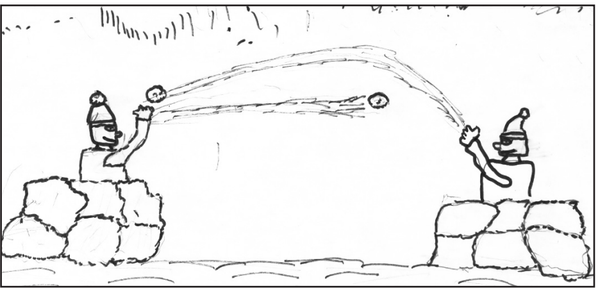
So, let us do more than join the angels in proclaiming, "Peace on earth and goodwill to all peoples!" Let us set up an economy that embraces the economics of Jesus. Maybe the united right will take this suggestion seriously, or maybe Prime Minister Paul Martin's government will bring about a change in policy.

Pray that God's will shall truly be done on earth as it is in heaven.

God bless you and grant you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year in 2004.



Sydney Miller, Grade 1, Metcalfe Public School



Mason Fisher, Grade 5, Metcalfe Public School



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

At this special time of year we wish everyone all the joy and peace of an old-fashioned Christmas.

from **Graham and Douglas Casselman**
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BRIGHT WISHES

We've been burning the candle at both ends to get ready for Christmas, and now that it's here, we'd like to say 'thanks' to all of you who've helped light up our lives throughout the year!



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Season's Greetings

Here's hoping your holiday is one-of-a-kind! We appreciate your continued loyal support. Thanks, everyone.

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Merry Christmas

and sincere thanks to our customers and friends this holiday season

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A gift of trees

BRINSTON — South Nation Conservation is once again offering a Christmas gift idea with a difference, something practical and very environmentally-friendly . . . live, healthy trees.

To make gift purchases even easier, SNC is providing holiday gift certificates which can be purchased before Christmas to be presented in attractive envelopes. They're redeemable for stock to be planted next spring.

"This is much more than a unique and affordable gift," said forest technician Ed Kupczyk. "It's a way of improving our rural landscape and of passing on the value of environmental stewardship to family and friends. It's a gift that keeps on giving."

Those who receive trees will be notified of the pick-up date and time. Planting can be done independently or with the help of SNC forestry professionals. A minimum of 100 trees per order is requested; a 1,000-tree minimum applies when SNC supplies planting services.

"We've been planting trees in conjunction with area property owners for more than a decade, Kupczyk said. "To date, we've planted some 1.5 million new trees within the watershed. That's a beautiful, lasting gift to future generations."

Trees have many benefits including increasing property value, serving as sight, sound and wind barriers, providing wildlife habitat, and reducing soil erosion.

At a cost ranging from 40 cents to 65 cents per seedling, gifts can be selected from the following tree varieties: white cedar, white and red pine, tamarack, white spruce, red and bur oak, black walnut and green ash. Different varieties have properties more suitable to certain planting locations.

For those on your gift list who don't have sufficient property for new trees, SNC offers another suggestion for heritage-minded recipients: A copy of *Reflections of the South Nation Watershed,* a 134-page pictorial history of the area which sells for $24.95.

For more information, or to place orders, call Ed Kupczyk or Angela Coleman at (877) 984-2948.



In this photo taken from Reflections of the South Nation Watershed, Hector Bourgeois is shown dog racing on the river in the winter of 1934.



Jessica Harper, Grade 1, Winchester Public School

HO HO HO

HERE'S HOPING ALL OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS HAVE A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS!

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Hope Your Christmas Is All It 'Auto' Be!
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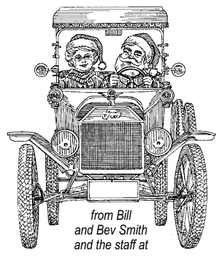

from Bill and Bev Smith and the staff at
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Season's Greetings

Wishing you a festive season filled with good friends, good times and good tidings.

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With Warm Regards

**The air outside may have a chill,
But we're warmed by thoughts of your goodwill,
Your support means more than we can say,
As we wish you a happy holiday!**



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A Christmas Serenade

May your holidays be harmonious, and may the high notes of a beautiful Christmas linger in your memory.
Thank you for your friendship. We wish you a joyful holiday, and a wonderful new year. Having you for a customer has been music to our ears.
We look forward to seeing you again very soon.

Fawcett's Jewellers & Fawcett's Pianos and Organs

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You can't have too many Christmas decorations



Homemade or store bought? It doesn't really matter; each decoration has a place during the holidays. Whether they are conservative or flashy, multicoloured or monochrome, decorations complete the decor and add a festive touch to any home. They can be made of wood, paper, cardboard, ribbon, pearls… the possibilities are endless.

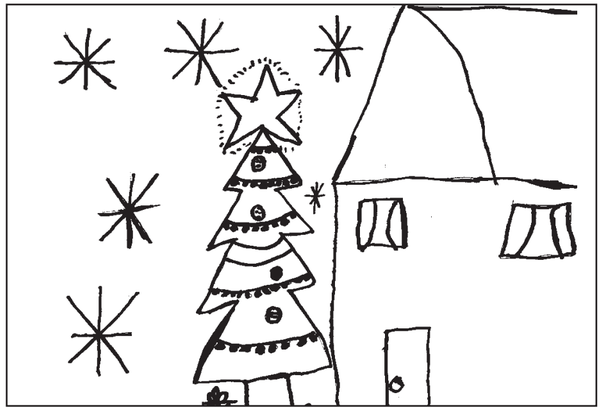
Children love making their own holiday decorations to liven up the Christmas tree or dinner table. Here's an easy project that you can do with kids of almost any age: Create Christmas card roping. You'll need wooden clothespins, red and green paint, piping, raffia, felt sheets in various colours, white cotton batting and glue.

Start by painting half the clothespins red and the other half green. Set aside to dry. Then, cut out hearts, angels, stockings and Christmas trees on the felt sheets. Remember to make a hole near the top of the cut-outs to pass the piping through. Make bows with the raffia. Alternately string these up on the piping—first a cut-out, then a bow. Then tie the ends of the piping together to make a long string. Your Christmas card roping is now ready to be hung up. Just attach the cards you receive with the help of your painted clothespins.

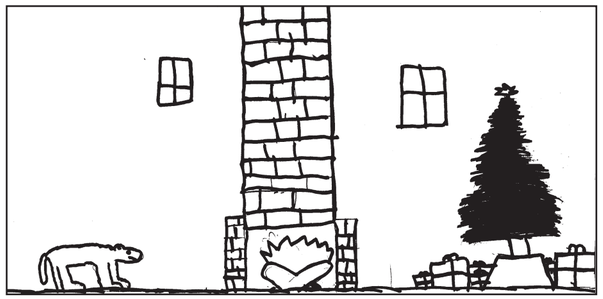
Or how about making decorations for the Christmas tree? Take Styrofoam balls and let the kids have fun gluing on sequins, lace and pearl roping. At your local arts & crafts store, you'll find more than enough accessories to decorate the entire tree. Let your creativity run wild and have fun making new family heirlooms with the kids!

'Handy' gift ideas

Handcrafted gifts are especially popular around the holidays. Typically inexpensive, they also show off your creative side and attention to detail. A simple wooden picture frame, painted gold, sprayed with glitter and adorned with metal stars is a simple way to spread some holiday cheer. Customize the frame with your own special message for Christmas.



Cassidy Scheepers, Grade 2, St. Mary's, Chesterville



Matthew Joldersma, Grade 6, Timothy Christian School



Resounding Christmas Wishes

May the spirit of Christmas ring in your heart and echo throughout the New Year. Please accept our best wishes at Christmas time and our sincere thanks for your loyal patronage.

Carol and Dwaine

Armstrong Burner Service

Winchester 774-3522

with our thanks

May good times come naturally this holiday season. It's been our joy serving you this year.

Peter Ross

Auction Service and Staff

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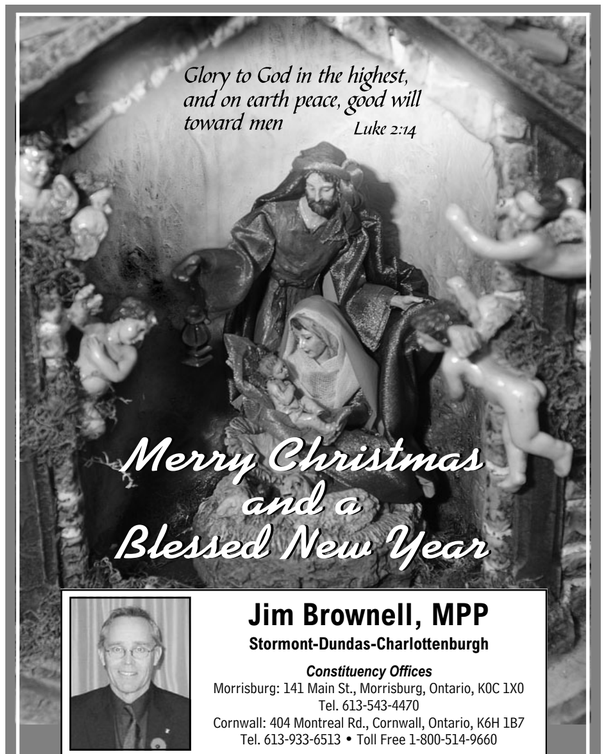

Jim Brownell, MPP

Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh

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Shepherd Talk: The economics of Jesus

by Rev. Bob Williams
Winchester United

The outpouring of generosity at this time of year in phenomenal, astounding, mind-boggling. It can be seen everywhere you hear the strands of *White Christmas* or any one of the carols that we love. Christmas is in the air, as much as it is in the shops.

There is the Christmas benevolence program that is a legacy of evangelist Rev. Billy Graham. It was adopted as our own by the local churches through our ministerial. Operation Christmas Child is another way that the Christian component of our society reaches out to the world in love. Seven million boxes will be distributed around the world this year; an increase of one million over last year. More than 725,000 of that total come from Canadians.

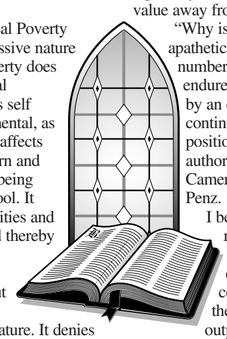
The Christian Children's Fund sponsors children in 12 countries around the globe, including the world's poorest, Burkina Faso. Salvation Army kettles abound in the malls and busy city intersections. Tim Hortons collects food parcels for distribution, in addition to its summer camp program. Grocery chains have boxes for collecting benevolent gifts, police and fire departments here and there have adopted programs to brighten the eyes of youngsters and parents. Radio and television stations have successful food, clothing, toy, and financial drives.

The expressed concern of our society for our neighbors is truly an assurance that Christ is in our midst and His spirit lives within us. There is no lack of commitment to Christian care, concern, and giving.

Even with everyone in agreement that no one ought to be in want, there still exist ranks of impoverished and these increase yearly. The saddest fact is that in Canada it is the very young and very old who suffer most. Street people, once a rarity, have come to be a common sight in our urban centres. It is estimated that a third of Canadian children are hungry on a regular basis.

Some 500 families draw on the food banks situated in Winchester, Morrisburg, and Mountain. These locations depend on local donations of food and collections in the communities. There is no lack of positive response.

Some years ago, the Real Poverty Report described the repressive nature of poverty in Canada. Poverty does not restrict itself to physical deprivation. It affects one's self image, social status, and mental, as well as physical, health. It affects the ability to study and learn and the likelihood of a person being educated beyond high school. It affects future job opportunities and thereby future income, and thereby the next generation. The quagmire of poverty conditions is hereditary, but not genetically so.



Poverty is spiritual in nature. It denies the value of the person who is made in God's image and thereby denies the image of God in the other. To paraphrase a well-known Christian bumper, "God makes only masterpieces." It is society, and especially the economy, that strips the value away from His precious ones.

"Why is the general population so apathetic about the fact that great numbers of our citizens are left to endure a life of poverty, exploited by an economic structure that continually reinforces their position of inequality?" ask authors Ian Adams, William Cameron, Brian Hill, and Peter Penz.

I believe that the question requires a rebuttal, rather than an answer. Canadians constantly show their concern for one another and the world through the outpouring of generosity listed above. The problem is not a matter of caring, or even the will to alleviate suffering. The problem is more elusive than that. The political leadership and its economic advisors do not have an effective strategy based on reliable economic theory to grapple with poverty.

This lower end of the economic spectrum could be employed to provide a benefit to the entire economy, rather than be just a burden and political whipping boy. Our economic Mandarins on the federal and provincial levels have not followed Christ's natal star that far yet. Ivory tower theorists are no better off.

There are, however, some signs of hope. Some freethinking economic theory is at least breaking away from the mind locks of the past by rejecting the "market equals the economy" equation. It is acknowledging the system's shortcomings and downright failures and attempting to be open to new and innovative ideas, some of which are as new as the first books of the Old Testament. It's a "new to you" affair, but it is hopeful.

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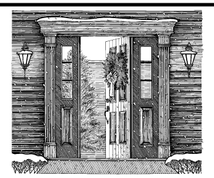

From our home to yours, a Very Merry Christmas and a Healthy and Happy New Year



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Merry Christmas

'Tis the season for us to say.
"Hope you enjoy a grand holiday."
May it be filled with joy and contentment,
Along with laughter and love and old-fashioned sentiment!

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Winchester 774-2417



Hannah Beckstead, Grade 3, Winchester Public School

Star Wars

• continued from previous page

extremely popular. (For a good discussion of how the rumored Boba Fett and Luke Skywalker ornaments were probably never produced, check *Star Wars Insider* magazine, Feb. 2003).

Collectors have also focused on the Rawcliff pewter ornaments which have been produced since 1999. The original collection of six is the most sought after. Another prize is the set of three Neiman Marcus metal ornaments from 1997. These ornaments can easily be found for sale online.

The whole association of Star Wars and Christmas is something that has originated with demand from the fan base. Star Wars merchandising has resisted an association with Christmas since Nov. 17, 1978, when the *Star Wars Holiday Special* was aired. While interesting to young people at the time, the special was so embarrassing that it has been unavailable on video ever since.

Whether Star Wars remains a part of Christmas in Canada, or the idea is only a passing fad, remains to be seen. What is certain, is that many groups of friends will come together this holiday season to watch the Star Wars movies. Star Wars is something that brings people together.



Although they look like Storm Troopers, these soldiers from Attack of the Clones were actually in the army that saved Senator Naberrie, and rescued the Jedi from extinction.



Penguin pals

Last seen in the Press newsroom, these penguins in holiday garb appeared to be out for a walk. Thank goodness they had their scarves.



Greetings At Christmas

May you and your loved ones enjoy the many blessings this special time of year brings.

We thank you for your continued support.

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The Rutters Family

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To all our farm families, we offer our best wishes for a joyous season and a prosperous new year. Thank you for helping us grow along with you.

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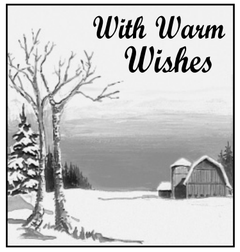



Have a MAGICAL Christmas

from the Management and staff



Wishing you a holiday filled with magic.
Hope your celebrations really stack up. Thanks for being such a good customer. It's been a pleasure serving you.

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Thanks, but no 'figgy pudding' for me, please

by Chris Zabel
Press staff

WINCHESTER — Christmas carols refer heavily to Christmas pudding. The average Canadian recognizes that there's a European tradition of serving "pudding" (aka figgy pudding, plum pudding) that has a long heritage at meals during the Christmas season.

While everyone is familiar with the mention of Christmas pudding, many may not know exactly what they're talking about when the dish comes up in carols they're singing.

Christmas pudding has nothing in common with what is sold under the name "pudding" in modern grocery stores. Christmas pudding will probably never be sold in disposable cups.

Today's Christmas pudding is in most cases a fruit cake with icing poured over it. These moist cakes are typically packed with raisins. The dessert has tended to fall out of favor, while still being widely served. Christmas culture in Canada may be at a point where it can generally be declared, that Christmas pudding has outlived its welcome as a tradition.

"So bring us some figgy pudding," is a demand often made by carolers. These requests for pudding date back to Medieval Britain. Around 1300, Christians realized they could plan ahead for Christmas meals if they used fruit to preserve their grains and meat. Suet was used as a preservative for the mixture which was packed into greased bags. The "figs" they used were pounds of raisins.

Over the course of a number of weeks while the pudding was stored, the fruits and grains would ferment, creating an alcoholic porridge. Before serving, the pudding was boiled.

This nasty tradition began when Christians were coping 800 years ago with their lack of refrigerators. They planned ahead to welcome hungry holiday revellers. The original idea was actually not a bad one.

The Christmas pudding tradition was firmly established in the 19th century when its cooking preparation was perfected. The appeal of the tradition was best put by Charles Dickens in *A Christmas Carol*:

"Hallo! A great deal of steam! The pudding was out of the copper [boiler]. A smell like washing–day! That was the cloth [the pudding bag]. A smell like an eating house and a pastrycook's next door to each other, with a laundress's next door to that! That was the pudding! In half a minute Mrs. Cratchit entered — flushed, but smiling proudly — with the pudding, like a speckled cannon ball, so

• continued on next page



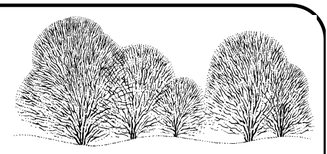
This young Victorian lady is unbothered by the dead goose on the counter. She thinks of her Christmas wish as she stirs the Christmas pudding.



Most Christmas puddings aren't prepared in a bag, but rather in a cake mould. Served in sauce, here is an appealing example of the delicacy.

Over The River And Through The Woods...

We'd go the distance to say, "Merry Christmas and many thanks!"



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Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

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Pudding

• continued from previous page

hard and firm, blazing in half of half-a-quartern of ignited brandy, and bedight with Christmas holly stuck into the top."

"Oh, a wonderful pudding! Bob Cratchit said, and calmly too, that he regarded it as the greatest success achieved by Mrs. Cratchit since their marriage."

The Christmas pudding was an icon of the Victorian holiday. What these puddings had in common was their plums or dried fruits (usually raisins), bread crumbs, beef suet, spice, and often spirits. Their ingredients were expensive and connoted wealth and festivity.

There were extensive traditions developed by the Victorians around how a Christmas pudding was to be prepared, before it was boiled into it's cannon-ball form. Everyone in the household was to take part in stirring the concoction of batter with rich fruits and nuts. The Victorians required that everyone stirring the pudding think about their Christmas wish. Coins and trinkets were often added as prizes.

These traditions are fascinating, and the idea of a large spherical cake with a sprig of holly on top, set afire with brandy, is appealing. But this isn't the case when modern Christmas pudding is served. More often than not, it is an offensive fruit cake: a sickly-sweet brick that no one wants to eat.

Modern Canadians don't need to use fruit as a preservative, or use any preservatives at all, because of the availability of grocery stores. People don't want to eat fruit cake, and this symbolic reference to the Christmas pudding is only serving to prolong the tradition. If Canadians aren't going to do it justice, they'd be better off dropping it completely.

A Christmas pudding should have a crust, but on the inside be falling-apart moist. It's most preferred soaked in spirits. The use of pounds of suet and pounds of raisins is no longer necessary. The fruits used should be exotic, not disgustingly sweet.



There are a number of companies that market their Christmas puddings across North America, often by mail. These examples of the tradition are always dry and disgustingly sweet.



Jarom Van Berkel, Grade 3, Morewood Public School



Linsey Vankoppen, Grade 1, Inkerman Public School



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Santa Claus and Yoda share some characteristics

by Chris Zabel
Press staff

WINCHESTER — There are many young adults today who are making Star Wars a traditional part of their Christmas celebrations. A number of them are even married, with spouses who agree that these traditions have merit.

It wasn't until recently that the Star Wars memorabilia industry noticed this trend, and companies began producing Christmas tree ornaments using Star Wars characters. Since 1997, Hallmark Greetings has released over 30 Star Wars ornaments, developing a collection including characters from the original three Star Wars movies, the most recent two "prequel" movies as well.

The first set of ornaments was made in 1996 in a line of Star Wars Minis, which included an X-wing fighter, a Tie fighter and a Snow-walker. Among Halmark's first creations was an angelic image of Princess Leia in her gown from the original *Star Wars*. She can hang on the tree next to a group of three Ewoks from *Return of the Jedi*; along with characters from the new movies, like Jar Jar Binks from *The Phantom Menace*, and a young Obi-Wan Kenobi from *Attack of the Clones*.

Popular artisans in the U.S. have followed the Christmas trend, producing their own collections of officially licensed Star Wars ornaments, and marketing them mainly over the Internet. Ornaments have been produced in pewter and hand-blown glass.

It's doesn't requires a very great leap in logic to associate Star Wars with Christmas. The holiday trend may have begun in 1977 at Halloween, when there were thousands of six-year-olds in Ontario, for example, who dressed up as Darth Vader.

More than 25 years later, a lot of these same people are today adults with boys of their own. It's not that fathers are training their boys to be Jedi. The trend is that when young family-men are faced with the duties of outfitting their kids for Halloween, or shopping for Christmas tree ornaments, a Star Wars product is going to seem like a reasonable choice.



Yoda doesn't make a bad Santa, from a certain point of view.

Canadians put a great deal of thought into how they decorate their Christmas trees. The need to buy and decorate a tree is a strong tradition. What qualifies as a Christmas tree ornament in the mind of the modern young adult has not been strictly defined.

There has never been anything preventing anyone from attaching hooks to the backs of their Star Wars action figures, and hanging them on the tree at Christmas. However, the idea probably hadn't occurred to most fans before Christmas ornaments started being sold.

The main benefit of the Christmas collections is that the pieces are designed to look good hanging on a tree. Because the figures don't have to be posable, they can be crafted in fine detail. The ornamental characters are well-proportioned to their places on branches, and they aren't meant to be played with

The Hallmark collection is by far the most extensive. For a catalogue of ornaments, check out www.ornamentmall.com. The current collection of 33 pieces is well balanced, and is certain to grow, knowing that the final Star Wars movie is still one more Christmas season away, scheduled for release in 2005.



Daughter of Princess Leia, the former Queen Amadala shows she can handle a blaster as well as her mother did in the original Star Wars.

There are already people actively collecting Star Wars Christmas ornaments. From 1998-99, glass-blower Christopher Radko was licensed to produce Star Wars ornaments. His Return of the Jedi figures were

• continued on next page



Trimmed With Best Wishes

May your heart be filled with the love of family, the warmth of good friends and the light of faith – all the trimmings for a truly satisfying holiday season.

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HOLIDAY GREETINGS

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Celebrate the sweet symbol of the season

For millions of Americans, the candy cane is synonymous with Christmas. Whether used as tree decorations, taped to gifts or simply enjoyed during holiday get togethers, candy canes evoke memories of the wonders of childhood. So powerful is their appeal that consumers spent nearly $65 million last year on candy canes.

The modern candy cane's design originated from the symbol of the shepherds' crook, representing the humble flock keepers who worshiped the newborn baby Jesus. Legend has it that in 1670, the choirmaster at the Cologne Cathedral handed out sugar sticks to keep his young singers quiet during the Nativity ceremony. To honor the occasion, the candies were bent into shepherds' crooks.

In 1847, August Imgard of Wooster, Ohio, decorated a small blue spruce with candy canes and paper ornaments, but it wasn't until the turn of the century that the red and white stripes and peppermint flavors became the norm.

In the 1920s, Bob McCormack began making candy canes as a Christmas treat for his family and friends. His Famous Candy Company, later changed to Bobs Candies, began with only five employees who completed the laborious process of twisting, cutting and bending each candy cane by hand.

The first candy manufacturer to wrap its products in cellophane, Bobs quickly earned a reputation as a leader and innovator — a tradition which has continued ever since.

In the 1950s, McCormack's brother-in-law, Gregory Keller, invented a machine to automate candy cane production. Packaging innovations by the McCormacks also made it possible to transport the delicate canes on a scale that transformed the company into the leading candy cane producer in the world, a position Bobs Candies still holds today.



While peppermint canes are still the most popular, the company offers a wide variety of cane flavors and sizes, including designer canes in delicious flavors like strawberry, blueberry and bubble gum.

To see how candy canes are made, and to share your favorite candy cane recipe or story, visit the Bobs Candies' Web site at www.bobscandies.com.

Did you know ... ?

In many countries, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, the day following Christmas is called Boxing Day. The origin of the holiday may date from the Middle Ages when priests opened the church's alms, or charity boxes on the day after Christmas and distributed the contents to the poor people of their local parish. According to another theory, the holiday began in England, when royalty or other wealthy individuals presented boxed Christmas gifts to their servants on December 26.



God Bless Each & Every One

Our warmest holiday wishes go out to you and yours during this special time of year. Thanks for your loyal support.

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Carly Doe, Grade 5, Winchester Public School

PEACE & JOY

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Natunola Health has recipe for holidays

WINCHESTER — With the holiday season upon us, most people are looking for new ways to entertain their guests. Natunola Health in Winchester would like to pass along some recipes that the flaxseed processor has developed, using its tasty new shelled flax ingredients.

These recipes are quick and easy (a holiday must) and are a healthy alternative to the usual holiday treats. The unique flax product produced at Natunola is available at the Village Bin in Winchester. It's recomended that either Natunola Omega-3 Flax 50, Flax 70, Flax 90, or Omega-3 Flax Fiber be used in these recipies.

Wishing you and everyone in Dundas County a Happy Holiday Season!

Banana Flax Muffins
1 cup mashed bananas
1 cup milk
1 egg
1 tsp. lemon extract
1/3 cup canola oil
1 1/2 cups whole wheat flour
1/2 cup Natunola Omega-3 flax meal
1/3 cup brown sugar, packed
3 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. salt
1/2 cup chocolate chips

Mix together the mashed bananas and milk. Stir in the egg, lemon extract and canola oil. Mix well. In a separate bowl, sift together the whole wheat flour, Natunola Omega-3 flax meal, brown sugar, baking powder and salt. Stir slowly into banana mixture until well mixed. Add in the chocolate chips. Spoon batter into greased muffin tins and sprinkle tops generously with Natunola Omega-3 flax kernel. Bake at 400°F for 20 minutes. Yields 12 muffins.



Omega-3 Flax Cheese Ball
1 package cream cheese, softened (8 oz./250 gram)
4 ounces cheddar cheese, shredded
1 teaspoon lime juice
1/2 small green pepper - finely chopped
1/2 small red onion - finely chopped
1 tablespoon chopped pimento (optional)
cayenne pepper (to taste)
salt (to taste)
1/4 cup Natunola Omega-3 flax kernel

Combine cream cheese and cheddar cheese. Add lime juice and mix well. Mix in green pepper, red onion, pimento, cayenne pepper and salt. Chill for one hour. Shape into a ball and roll in Natunola Omega-3 flax kernel. Serve with crackers or vegetables.

• continued on next page



Mitchel, Grade 3, Winchester Public School

With Thanks & Best Wishes

We'd like to express our gratitude For your kind and neighborly attitude. At Christmas and throughout the year, Know you're always welcome here.

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Danielle, Ken & Staff

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Who cares about the snow when we have such fond memories to keep us warm! It's been a real joy serving all of you this past year.
Happy Holiday!

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We're grateful for your valued business. It's been a real pleasure serving you throughout 2003! We look forward to your continued visits in the New Year!

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Natunola

• continued from previous page

Omega-3 Flax Taco Nibblers

2 packages crescent roll dough (8 oz./250 gram)
1 package cream cheese, softened (8 oz./250 gram)
1/2 package taco seasoning mix
2 tomatoes, seeded and chopped
1 small green pepper, chopped
1/2 small red onion, finely chopped
1/4 cup Natunola Omega-3 flax kernel

Separate the crescent roll dough into rectangles and spread to fill a large baking sheet. Press the perforations firmly to seal. Bake in preheated oven at 375°F for 10-12 minutes. Let cool. Mix together cream cheese and taco seasoning mix. Spread mixture over crescent roll dough and top with remaining ingredients. Cut into squares and serve.

Try different toppings for a variation of this recipe (chopped broccoli, green onions, red peppers, salsa, black olives, shredded cheese, etc).

Cranberry Flax Coffee Cake

1/2 cup butter or shortening
1 cup white sugar
1 cup sour cream
2 eggs
1/2 cup buttermilk
1/2 cup Natunola Omega-3 flax fiber
1 1/2 cups flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. baking powder
1/2 cup Natunola Omega-3 flax kernel
1 1/2 cups dried cranberries
Glaze:
1/8 cup icing sugar
1 tbsp. water
2 tbsp. Natunola Omega-3 flax kernel

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease a 10-inch tube pan. In a bowl, mix together the butter with sugar until fluffy. Add sour cream, eggs and buttermilk, mixing well. In a separate bowl, mix together Natunola Omega-3 flax fiber, flour, baking soda and baking powder. Add dry ingredients to creamed mixture until just blended. Gently stir in Natunola Omega-3 flax kernel and the cranberries. Pour into prepared tube pan spreading evenly. Bake for 60 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean and top is brown. Let cool for 10 minutes then remove from pan and cool completely on wire rack.

Glaze: Mix icing sugar and water (add more sugar if it's too runny or more water if it's too thick). Spoon the glaze over the cake, allowing it to drizzle down the sides. The cake must be cooled completely or the glaze will melt. Sprinkle top of cake with Natunola Omega-3 flax kernels.

Flax Ginger Snaps

3/4 cup shortening
1 cup sugar
1 egg
1/4 cup molasses
1/4 cup Natunola Omega-3 flax meal
1/4 cup Natunola Omega-3 flax fiber
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
2 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. cinnamon
1/2 tsp. cloves
1 tsp. ginger
white sugar

Cream together shortening, sugar and egg. Add in molasses and stir well. Mix in Natunola Omega-3 flax meal, Natunola Omega-3 flax fiber, all-purpose flour and baking soda. Mix well. Stir in cinnamon, cloves and ginger and form mixture into balls. Roll balls in sugar, place on a baking sheet and flatten with a fork. Bake at 325°F for 13 - 18 minutes. Remove from baking sheet and allow to cool. Yields approximately 2 1/2 dozen cookies.



Frisco MacMillan, Winchester Public School

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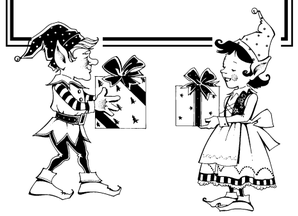

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It's just days before Christmas and all through the town,
We see happy people; not even one frown.
It's great to see folks who show so much care
For their friends and their neighbors - today it's so rare.
So we'd like to thank you this time of the year
For all of the memories we hold so dear.
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To us, your community and all whom you touch.

Have a wonderful holiday!

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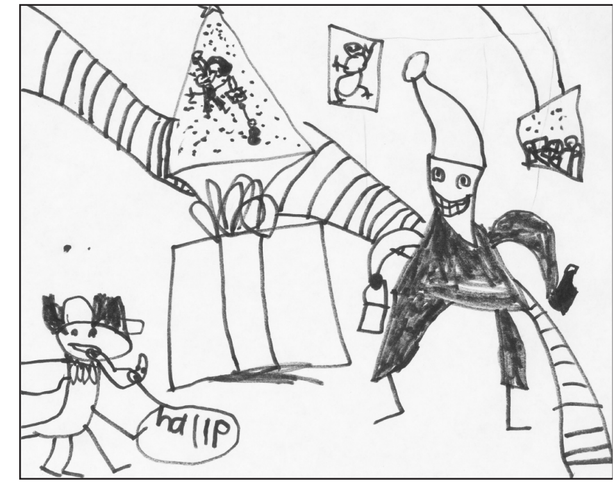
Nature is filled with beauty and adventure all year long. If you have real outdoor fans on your to-buy-for list, Christmas is the perfect occasion to treat them with practical gear and equipment. Whether they enjoy camping, hunting or hiking, you won't have any trouble finding a gift they'll be sure to love.

Let's take camping as an example. Obviously, camping involves sleeping outside and that requires quality equipment. The more extreme the style of camping, the more specialized and higher quality this equipment needs to be. A tent adapted to someone's camping needs will make a fantastic gift. Alternatively, you can treat the person to a better night's rest with a foam mattress, self-inflating mattress or a sleeping bag. A flashlight or headlamp also makes a practical gift.

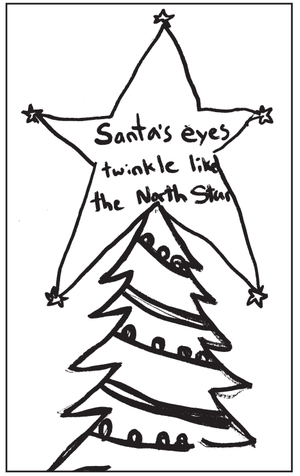
Or how about hiking? There are many practical accessories needed for those long treks, like a compass, pedometer, distress whistle, walking stick, backpack, binoculars, first aid kit, etc.

Don't forget that spending all this time outdoors really builds up an appetite. A camp stove, portable barbecue, camping dish set, canteen or pocket knife will make meal times a lot easier. Finally, there is footwear of all kinds for different types of outdoor activities. Specialized footwear will ensure maximum comfort and safety.

If you aren't sure what specific items to buy, talk to the experts at your local outdoor sports boutique. They'll be happy to steer you in the right direction. They may even show you some items you never knew existed!



Ty Beaudry, Grade 1, Winchester Public School



Taylor Richards, Grade 6
Winchester Public School

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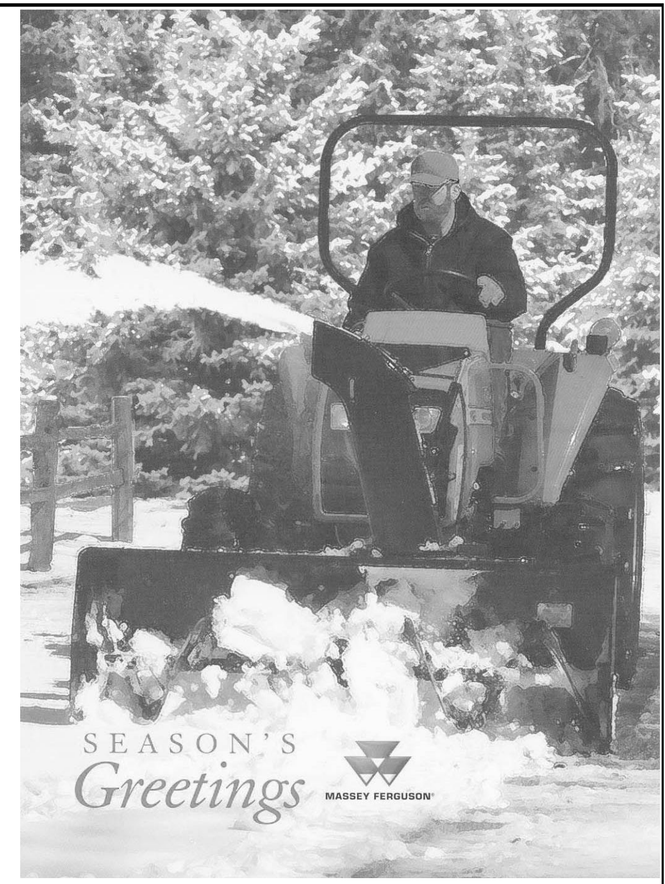

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Remake done with class

by Jason Burgoone

Director Les Mayfield pays tribute to the 1947 Christmas classic with his 1994 remake of *Miracle on 34th Street*. It has an excellent cast of characters, including a breakthrough performance from child actress Mara Wilson as Susan Walker.

Actress Elizabeth Perkins plays Dorey Walker, a single mother who, after a hurtful divorce, has lost her belief in everything that Santa and the spirit of Christmas stand for. Dorey has raised her daughter, Susan, with what she feels is an appropriate way to approach life — skeptically. Dorey's longtime friend and unknowing love interest Bryan Bedford (Dylan McDermott) attempts to change both mother and daughters' outlook on the spirit of Christmas.



At work, Dorey unknowlingly replaces an intoxicated Saint Nick with the one and only Kris Kringle (Richard Attenborough) moments before the annual Cole's Thanksgiving day parade. Following the successful switch, Kris is hired to represent the struggling Cole's department store and maintain the popular Santa Claus image as part of a new marketing plan formed by Dorey. Her confidence in Kris' unique ability to help and comfort both young and old alike does little to convince her of his true identity.

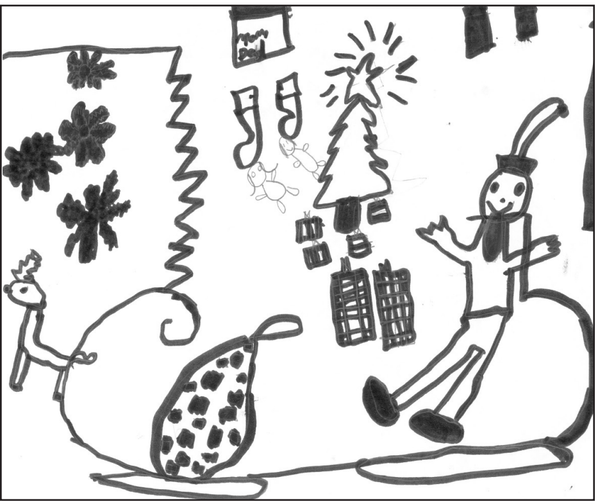
Guaranteed to leave both children and parents with a renewed sense of Christmas spirit, Attenborough's performance as Kris Kringle is both enjoyable and believable.

Kringle is arrested after being set up by a rival store's employees, and his image is splashed across every newspaper and television screen in the city depicting him as mentally ill and violent. Families across the country are in disbelief, including young Susan, who's new-found hope was shattered by what the crown prosecutor feels is a dangerously delusional man.

Wilson's role as Susan is impressively performed, displaying a level of maturity well beyond her years. In a pivotal scene, Attenborough's character describes himself as "a symbol of the human ability able to suppress the selfish and hateful tendencies that rule a major part of our lives" in response to Susan's constant doubt. Susan later reflects on the message from Kris and comes to understand the true meaning of the Christmas spirit.

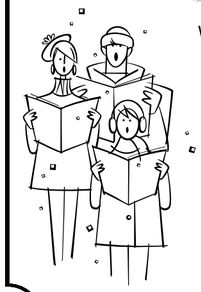
Public support for Kris is rallied when Dorey, Cole's management, and Kringle's friend and public defender (Bedford) are convinced of his honest intentions and stable mental health. Following a heavily publicized and difficult court room battle, the judge has a last minute change of heart and decides to rule in favor of Kris. Susan's last shred of doubt is cast aside when her one wish is answered by what could have only been the spirit of Christmas.

Mayfield's cast and crew recreate the timeless Christmas classic with the respect. *Miracle on 34th Street* is sure to leave the entire family smiling and wondering where the spirit of Christmas comes from.



Marissa Imrie, Grade 3, Winchester Public School

Fa...La...La...La...La!



We'd like to chime in with a chorus of best wishes and thanks to you, our customer.

Hope your holiday season hits all the high notes.

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We're thinking of you and sending our thanks.

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... is to say, "Have a very merry holiday and many thanks for your valued business!"

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A taste of Christmas

Thanks to the global village we that we now live in, Christmas is taking on a whole new world of flavours. Although Christmas is celebrated in many regions of the world, each country has its own culinary traditions related to this annual event. And that means Christmas gets more and more delicious each year!

In France, Christmas dinner is not all that different from the meal we enjoy here in Canada—turkey and Yule log are common dishes in many households. However, our French cousins prefer to have their turkeys stuffed with chestnuts. In Provence, the luckier ones observe the ritual of 13 desserts, representing the Last Supper with Jesus and his 12 disciples.

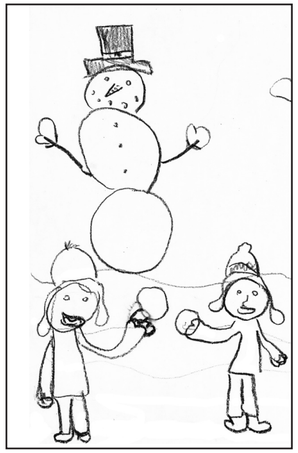
In Britain and Germany, Christmas pudding is served with the traditional tea. Over the centuries, however, the recipe has somewhat changed. At one time there was a ritual surrounding the actual making of the pudding itself. It involved stirring the pudding in a clockwise direction with a wooden spoon—as a tribute to the manger in which Jesus was born.

In Germany and a few other European countries, one custom involves preparing a witch's house—similar to the gingerbread houses we make here in Canada. These confections resemble the house from the famous Andersen fairytale, Hansel and Gretel. Fruit and rum cakes are also very popular at Christmas.

In Norway, smoked salmon is enjoyed at Christmas. For centuries, after mass on the 25th, families and close friends have been getting together to eat the "Julebord," a lavish breakfast consisting of pork, stuffed cabbage, dried cod, traditional bread and various pastries. Meanwhile, in Belgium and Luxemburg, everyone enjoys "speculoos," tasty gingerbread men that look suspiciously like Saint Nicholas!



Jodi Crump, Grade 5, Morewood Public School



Courtney Carrier, Grade 2
Metcalfe Public School

Holiday Greetings

May you rejoice in the beauty of the season and all the wonderful things it has to offer. For your kind patronage, we are truly thankful and look forward to seing you again soon.

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Wishing You Joy, Peace and Enlightenment At Christmas



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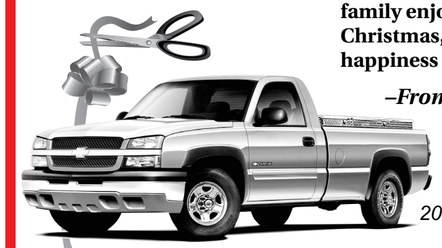

2004 Silverado

NOW WE GIVE THANKS...

We extend a heartfelt thanks to our customers past and present. It's a pleasure serving you. We hope you and your family enjoy a wonderful Christmas, and health and happiness in the New Year.

–From Management & Staff

SALES AND SERVICE HOURS

SALES: Open Wednesday, Dec. 24, 9 am-noon
Closed Thursday and Friday, Dec. 25 & Dec. 26
Open Saturday, Dec. 27, 9 am-2 pm
Open Monday & Tuesday, Dec. 29 & 30, regular hours
Open Wednesday, Dec. 31, 9 am-2 pm
Closed Thursday, Jan. 1, 2004 – Open Friday, Jan. 2

SERVICE: Open Wednesday, Dec. 24, 8 am-noon
Closed Thursday and Friday, Dec. 25 & Dec. 26
Open Wednesday, Dec. 31, 8 am-noon
Open Monday & Tuesday, Dec. 29 & 30, regular hours
Closed Thursday, Jan. 1, 2004 • Open Friday, Jan. 2

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Hot tubs and winter nights: A perfect combination

Warmth, relaxation, a change of scenery... these words are like magic to one's ears in the middle of winter when we've been beaten and bruised by the cold weather and lack of sunlight. And the most amazing thing is that these luxuries are available just outside your doorstep. All you need is an outdoor hot tub! Forget the summer months, it's during the long, cold winter that an outdoor hot tub will do you the most good.

Are you closing your hot tub for the winter? You might want to think twice. With all the long nights headed our way, and the bright starlit skies that will be decorating our views, winter is the ideal time to take advantage of this unbeatable form of relaxation. After all, submersing yourself in balmy water and massaging your sore spots with the water jets could be exactly what you need after a long day of shoveling snow. Besides, most of us don't get enough fresh air during the winter months. So why not take advantage of your hot tub all year long?

Of course, a few conditions do apply if you want to use your hot tub during the winter. When purchasing a model, make sure it is designed to be used year-long. To keep you warm when the mercury plummets, the tub needs sufficient insulation and a powerful heater. Naturally, these models are a bit more expensive, but the first time you slip into your hot tub on a cold January night, you'll know it was well worth the money.

You'll also enjoy your outdoor hot tub much more if it can be installed fairly close to your home. Long walks in a bathing suit aren't very pleasant when its 20 below zero!

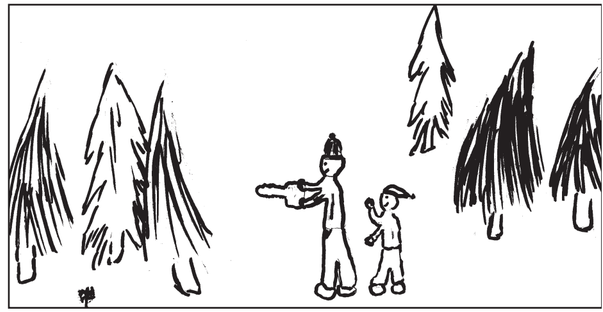
If you can afford such a purchase, don't hesitate. It's a incredible way for the entire family to relax and spend some quality time together. And you'll never sleep more soundly than after having spent some time in a hot tub on a cold winter's night. The warmth will literally melt your tensions and worries away.

Holiday tip

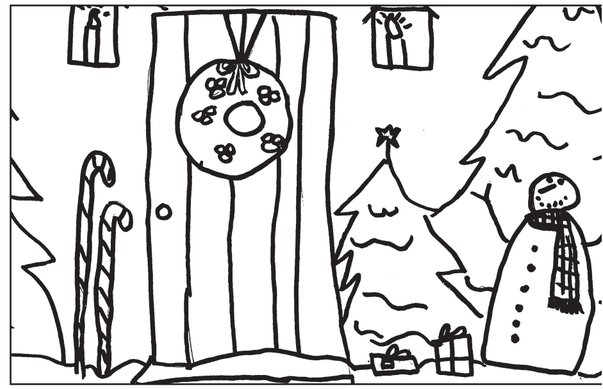
Spread the joy of the holidays with creative ways to give your Christmas goodies, courtesy of www.everydaycook.com:

• Put your homemade candies in mini-cupcake liners and put them in a small shallow box. They will look like they just came from the candy store.

• Stack your cookies, wrap them in clear cellophane and tie each end with Christmas ribbon.



Emma Brunsveld, Grade 6, Timothy Christian School



Megan Chamberlain, Grade 4, Morewood Public School

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There's no time like the present to let you know how much we appreciate the gift of your friendship!

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Holiday Warmth to You

May your season be filled with family, friends and many good times. You have our sincere gratitude for your patronage. Happy holidays, everyone!

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'Tis the season to celebrate good friends and neighbors like you.

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