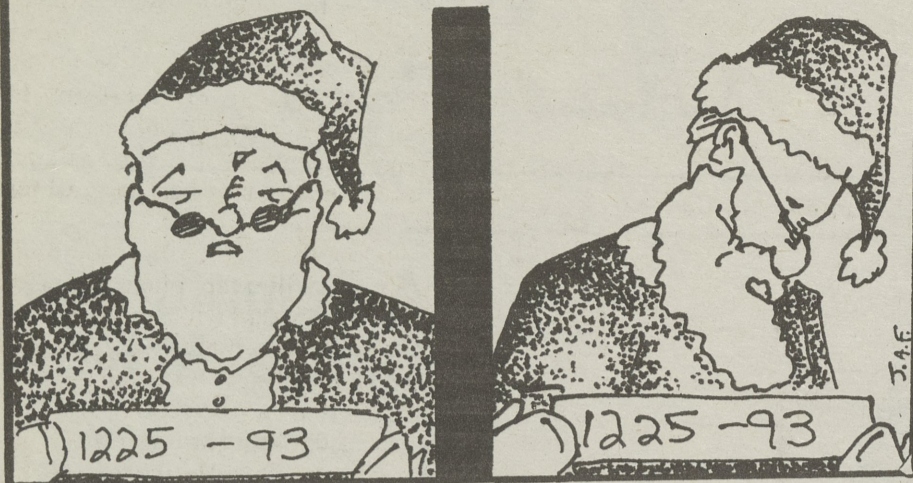




HOLIDAYS '93



A lifetime of crime comes to an end when Kris Kringle, a.k.a. Santa Claus is convicted of breaking and entering.



Christmas Shopping Ideas For Relatives and Friends

By Jennifer Holland

"Dashing through the stores, with a pocket full of dough, looking for a special gift, and not knowing where to go!" This is what you'll be singing this Christmas season if you get confused when buying presents for your family, friends, or even that special someone in your life. When the time comes, and you are standing in the middle of the crowded mall, it's hard to remember what it is that people really want for Christmas. Here are a couple of inexpensive holiday hints to help you when making that expedition to the mall.

If you are shopping for your parents, try something unique. Don't get the same candle holders that you got them last year, which they put into the back of the closet. Perhaps a nice designer blanket would go nice on the living room furniture. JCPenney has some nice patterns to choose from in their Christmas catalog. If you are not a blanket person, go with a nice pair of matching sweatshirts. The Delco bookstore has the ideal sweatshirts for parents.

When you shop for family and friends, it is always important to buy them something they don't already have. Keep in mind that you want to stay within reasonable price limits, especially if you have a large family and group of friends to buy for. Card stores always have the nicest gifts for families. You want to get them something to remind them of you and when they see it they'll think of you. Christmas ornaments make a great gift.

You can even get words engraved on them, and it is not expensive. It is a perfect present and they can use it every Christmas.

Friends, on the other hand, like humorous gifts, some type of personal joke that the two of you can only laugh about. Stores, such as Spencer's, have the perfect gadgets. Music is also a good choice when buying for friends. Sam Goody's and Tower Records always have the latest music, and the prices are reasonable.

Now comes the hardest part of all, buying for that special guy or girl in your life. First of all, the gift depends on the relationship itself. If you have only been dating for a couple of weeks, then go with something cute, yet simple. You don't want to go all out and wind up breaking up with the person the following week. For guys, teddy bears and flowers are always good for beginning relationships. Girls also like a nice card to go with their gift, so keep that in mind, fellas! For girls, a sharp hat of their favorite team always does the trick. You can even buy a nice stocking to go along with it, and fill it up with simple things like candy or baseball cards, whatever seems to interest them.

When the relationship starts to enter into a five-month period, then you can buy a little more. Go with the teddy bear and baseball hat approach, then just add a little more to it. Perhaps you can go with their favorite perfume or cologne. Keep in mind that these are only helpful hints and the idea really depends on the person you are buying for.

Celebrating Christmas; Its Legends and Myths

By James Foltz

"Merry Christmas!" the jolly old man yells from his sleigh harnessed with eight tiny reindeer. He lands on a rooftop and slips down a chimney into a fireplace. From a large sack he pulls many presents and places them beneath a tree decorated with ornaments. Then with a mighty "Ho Ho!" he is off. Up the chimney he goes.

Of course, the world knows who he is, but there are very few people who know his true origins. Or for that matter, the true origins of Christmas. So, the big question is, "Where did Christmas come from?"

First of all, take a step back and look at the reason for this holiday. Christmas is supposedly when Jesus Christ was born and so this is the reason for celebration.

If Santa Claus isn't a symbol of Christmas, then I don't know what is. He goes by different names throughout the world, ie. Kris Kringle, Saint Nicholas and so on, but essentially this is the same person flying from house to house in a sleigh delivering presents to the nice and giving coal to the naughty. So the first question is: Where did Santa come from?

Santa, believe it or not, was borrowed from Thor of German mythology. Thor, the god of thunder, is described as "an elderly man who was jovial and friendly." He had a heavy build with a long, snow white beard. Thor drove a chariot pulled by goats and lived up in the Northland. The element fire was his symbol and his color was red. Fireplaces in the home were sacred to him and he would enter a home through the chimney. Washington Irving contributed to the conception of Santa Claus and Clement Moore composed *Visit from St. Nicholas* (" 'Twas the night before Christmas") with Irving's previous description. But ultimately, cartoonist Thomas Nast, burned the modern image of Santa into our skulls with a drawing in 1863.

Ah, but what about the gifts, you may ask.

The giving of gifts was a feature of Saturnalia, a festival dedicated to Saturn, the god of agriculture, and other pagan feasts; a person was expected to give presents to friends.

And that lovely decorated tree

that sits in your living room also has a very interesting origin. This is something which has survived through the years originating with ancient pagan rituals of winter light and rebirth.

Thinking back to when you gave your sweetheart a kiss under the mistletoe, you might be interested to know that Druids in England used mistletoe in their worship which had relationship to demonic and occult powers.

By the way, that star which rests on top of the tree is not the North star which lead the wise men (who are actually astrologers) to baby Jesus. Nope, the star was worshiped in the East as a symbol of purity, goodness and peace long before the nativity of Christ.

Speaking about Christ, I am sure that you might like to know this little tid bit of information.

When Jesus Christ was crucified, he was 33 and a half years old. Anyone with an elementary school mathematics education could count backwards from Christ's death and see that it is impossible for Christ to have been born on December 25. Some celebrated the birth of Mithra, an Indo-Iranian god of light and justice, on this day, however.

Also, those who worshiped the sun thought that their god was dying because of the shortened days during December. They lit candles and bonfires to help revive the god. They believed that it worked because after the winter solstice (December 21), the sun god appeared to regain strength as each day grew longer.

So, how did December 25 get chosen for Christmas?

Well, it just so happens that December was the high point of winter revelries during pagan celebrations. In the 4th or 5th century A.D., the Bishop of Rome chose the 25th as Christ's birthday to "sanctify" the pagan celebrations and to emphasize the birth of Christ as the "Light of the World" which came into the darkness. Christians were told to adapt pagan customs and beliefs rather than remove them. They were told to blend the pagan symbols into the worship of Christ and allow pagans to continue their worship. The result of the mixture of pagan and Christian celebrations is obvious.

— Recipes for Celebrating the Holidays —

Jamaican Christmas Pudding

Mince:

1 lb raisins
1/2 lb currents
1/2 lb prunes
1/4 lb cherries
1/4 lb mixed peel

Add:

2 cups rum
4 cups port wine
1/2 tsp. grated nutmeg
1/2 tsp. cinnamon

Allow to soak for at least 2 weeks.

Simmer soaked fruit with 2 cups port wine, stirring constantly for 15 minutes. Leave to cool. Make dark coloring from 2 ozs. dark sugar over

low heat until liquid and very dark. Sieve together 1/4 lb flour, 1 cup bread crumbs, 1 tsp baking powder and 1/2 tsp salt. Cream 1/2 butter adding gradually 1/2 lb dark sugar then 6 eggs individually mixing well. Add cool prunes, dark coloring then flour etc. mix. Add 1/4 lb chopped nuts, rind of a lime and 1 tbsp vanilla. Pour into lined 9" baking tin to lynch from top. Place greased paper on top of pudding and secure with cover. Place a pie tin upside down in a large pot. Place pudding on top and add water to 1/2 depth of pudding. Bring to boil. Lower heat to medium and maintain water level to 1/2 depth until pudding leaves side of baking tin. Approx. 3 hrs. Serve cold.

Submitted by Delrose Seabrooks

Pound Cake

(The following is President Bill Clinton and his daughter Chelsea's favorite dessert which I obtained from Liza Ashley, chief cook at the Governor's Mansion in Little Rock, Arkansas on June 5, 1990 while attending the National Convention as a Pennsylvania delegate for the National Federation of Independent Businesses)

1 pound butter
3 cups sugar
6 eggs

3-1/2 cups flour
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup buttermilk

Grease and flour tube pan. Cream butter and sugar well. Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each one. Then add the dry ingredients one at a time, mixing in a third of the buttermilk after each one. Bake in tube

pan at 350 for 1 hour and 25 minutes.

Submitted by Wes Tomlinson

Philly 3 Step Cheesecake

2 8oz. pks. of cream cheese (softened)
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 tsp. vanilla
2 eggs

1 ready crust graham cracker pie crust

1. Mix cream cheese, sugar, and vanilla medium speed with mixer until blended. Add eggs, mix until blended.

2. Pour mixture into crust.
3. Bake at 350 for 40 min. or until center is almost set. Cool. Refrigerate for 3 hours or overnight. Top with preferred topping.

Submitted by Nicole Gibbs