

THE WESTBROOK CHATTERBOX

The Christmas season is upon us. We have lots of wonderful entertainment coming in this year. Be sure to watch your calendar closely so you don't miss anything. Below April, Joan and I have shared one of our special Christmas memories with you.

I have so many precious memories of Christmas. My father was one of Santa's assistants. I used to tell people my dad was Santa Claus which of course wasn't true. But one of my favorites is of my Granddaddy Dutch. I was the only granddaughter and every year for Christmas he would buy me a dress. I would look forward to seeing what kind of dress he would pick out. He had impeccable taste. But the year I turned 13 was even more than I had ever hoped. That Christmas I received a beautiful red skirt and vest set with a white dressy blouse. I was thrilled but then he handed me another box. I was confused why I had a second gift. Of course, I opened it eagerly and inside it was.....my first pair of high heels. My parents had always said I was too young but Granddaddy Dutch convinced them otherwise.—Here's to a Merry Christmas and more Christmas memories!! Janelle

I absolutely love Christmas time! My favorite memory/tradition is on Christmas Eve. All the family would gather at my mother and father-in-law's home for dinner. Each year the meal was a little different-Mexican one year, seafood one year, Chinese, then BBQ. After dinner, we would head to Church for the Candlelight Service. The service is always so special and creates a time of reflection on the true meaning of Christmas, and such a Spirit of peace and joy that seems to calm all the hustle and bustle of the past few weeks of shopping and getting ready for the day. After the service we would head back to their home for a "Birthday Party for Jesus" complete with singing, cake and ice cream! Linda would decorate the Birthday Cake with a ceramic Nativity scene. We have a special character along with the Nativity on the cake. We have a Weeble-Wobble toy added to the scene. When my son was about 2 ½, he asked his grandmother where "Brown John Bergin" was? We finally figured out that in the song "Silent Night", Derek would sing "Brown John Bergin, Mother and Child", so from that day, even still, we have a Weeble that sits next to Mary and Jesus on the cake! It was always a very special time to spend with the family. Since the passing of my mother-in-law, the traditions have changed some. On Christmas Eve, we still go to the Candlelight Service, but the family gathers on Christmas Day for dinner, gifts and a "Birthday Party for Jesus" complete with cake, ice cream and Brown John Bergin. Praying that you all have a very Merry Christmas! Love, April

A fond memory of Christmas (and many times in between) is of my grandmother washing dollar bills! We would travel to Marshalltown, IA, for the holidays and grandma had a top load washing machine in her kitchen. She would tell my brother and I that her dollar bills were dirty. She'd put them in the washer and add detergent. She would open the lid and my brother and I would stand on a chair and watch the sudsy money whirl around. When the dollar bills were washed and dried, grandma would say she wanted us to have them. It was probably two or three dollars for each of us. We cherished them. ~ Joan

You had better be good

Sarah and her 13-year-old sister had been fighting a lot this year. This happens when you combine a headstrong two-year-old, who is sure she is always right, with a young adolescent.

Sarah's parents, trying to take advantage of her newfound interest in Santa Claus, reminded the two-year-old that Santa was watching and doesn't like it when children fight. This had little impact.

"I'll just have to tell Santa about your misbehaviour," the mother said as she picked up the phone and dialled.

Sarah's eyes grew big as her mother asked, 'Mrs Claus' (really Sarah's aunt; Santa's real line was busy) if she could put Santa on the line. Sarah's mouth dropped open as Mum described to Santa (Sarah's uncle) how the two-year-old was acting. When Mum said that Santa wanted to talk to her, Sarah reluctantly took the phone.

Santa, in a deepened voice, explained to her how there would be no presents Christmas morning to children who fought with their sisters. He would be watching, and he expected things to be better from now on.

Sarah, now even more wide eyed, solemnly nodded to each of Santa's remarks and silently hung the phone up when he was done. After a long moment, Mum (holding in her chuckles at being so clever) asked, "What did Santa say to you, dear?"

In almost a whisper, Sarah sadly but matter-of-factly stated, "Santa said he won't be bringing toys to my sister this year."

The Hidden Meaning Behind the 12 Days of Christmas

This gives a whole new meaning to the song...

- People often think of 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' as the days preceding the festival. Historically, Christmas is the season of the Christian Year for the days beginning on December 25 and lasting until January 6 (the Day of Epiphany) when the church celebrates the revelation of Christ as the light of the world and recalls the journey of the Magi. From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not allowed to practice their faith openly. During that era someone wrote 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' as a kind of secret catechism that could be sung in public without risk of persecution. The song has two levels of interpretation: the surface meaning plus a hidden meaning known only to members of the church. Each element in the carol is a code word for a religious reality.

The "partridge in a pear tree" is Jesus Christ.

The two turtledoves are the Old and New Testaments.

- The three French hens stand for faith, hope and love.
- The four calling birds are the four Gospels.
- The five gold rings recall the torah (Law) the first five books of the Old Testament.
- The six geese a-laying stand for the six days of creation.
- The seven swans a-swimming represent the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit.
- The eight maids a-milking are the eight beatitudes.
- The nine ladies dancing are the nine fruits of the Spirit (Gal.5).
- The ten lords a-leaping are the Ten Commandments.
- The eleven pipers piping stand for the eleven faithful disciples.
- The twelve drummers drumming symbolize the 12 points of belief in the Apostles Creed.

There you have it... the *hidden* meaning of "The Twelve Days of Christmas" and the secret behind the song.

DECEMBER

It's Christmas Time Again

Put your problems on probation
Run your troubles off the track,
Throw your worries out the window
Get the monkeys off your back.
Silence all your inner critics
With your conscience make amends,
And allow yourself some happiness
It's Christmas time again!

Call a truce with those who bother you
Let all the fighting cease,
Give your differences a breather
And declare a time of peace,
Don't let angry feelings taint
The precious time you have to spend,
And allow yourself some happiness
It's Christmas time again!

Like some cool refreshing water
Or a gentle summer breeze,
Like a fresh bouquet of flowers
Or the smell of autumn leaves,
It's a banquet for the spirit
Filled with family, food and friends,
So allow yourself some happiness
It's Christmas time again!



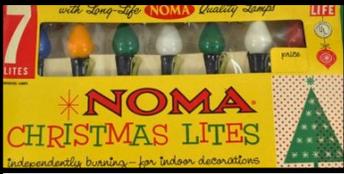
This year instead of a New Year's Eve Party will be having a Holiday Happy Hour and Dinner on December 29th. We will have drinks and appetizers in the Social Room starting at 4:00pm followed by dinner at 5:00pm. Dinner will be soup (Clam Chowder or Broccoli Cheese) served in Bread Bowls with a Side Salad. Dessert will be petit fours, cream puffs and such.

SOUNDS OF CHRISTMAS

There's music of the holidays playing on the radio
There's Christmas decorations almost everywhere you go.
The Salvation Army bells ring out for the poor
The "Ho, Ho., Ho" of Santa Claus in the department stores.
Carolers sing Christmas songs going, house to house
Tales about, where no one stirs not even, a mouse.
Hoofbeats in fresh fallen snow pulling, an open sleigh
Children asking Mom and Dad, "Is Santa on his way?"
Cracklin' from the fireplace roasting chestnuts 'neath the coals
The soft murmur of prayers said, for the lost souls.
Friends and family gather to toast, Christmas cheer
There's sounds of angels singing (If, you really want to hear)
The sounds of Christmas, fill the air as we celebrate His birth
Wishing joy, to all mankind and peace to all on earth.



A Little Holiday Humor



Good Lights - A customer walked into our store looking for Christmas lights. I showed her our top brand, but—wanting to make sure each bulb worked—she asked me to take them out of the box and plug them in. I did, and each one lit up.

"Great," she said.

I carefully placed the string of lights back in the box. But as I handed them to her, she looked alarmed. "I don't want this box," she said abruptly. "It's been opened."

Gift Exchange - My friend reviewed her young son's fill-in-the-blank homework. One line: "At Christmas, we exchange gifts with ____." His response: "Receipts."

Hiding the Presents - I had finished my Christmas shopping early and had wrapped all the presents. Having two curious children, I had to find a suitable hiding place. I chose an ideal spot—the furnace room. I stacked the presents and covered them with a blanket, positive they'd remain undiscovered.

When I went to get the gifts to put them under the tree, I lifted the blanket and there, stacked neatly on top of my gifts, were presents addressed to "Mom and Dad, From the Kids."

Limited Knowledge - As we were putting out cookies for Santa on Christmas Eve, I accidentally dropped one. "No problem," I said, picking it up and dusting it off before placing it back on the plate.

"You can't do that," argued my four-year-old. "Don't worry. Santa will never know."

He shot me a look. "So he knows if I've been bad or good, but he doesn't know the cookie fell on the floor?"



Little Red Wagon - It was the day after Christmas at a church in San Francisco. The pastor of the church was looking over the crèche when he noticed that the baby Jesus was missing from among the figures. He hurried outside and saw a little boy with a red wagon, and in the wagon was the figure of the little infant Jesus.

So he walked up to the boy and said, "Well, where did you get your passenger, my fine friend?" The little boy replied, "I got Him at church."

"And why did you take Him?"

The boy explained, "Well, about a week before Christmas I prayed to the little Lord Jesus and I told Him if He would bring me a red wagon for Christmas I would give Him a ride around the block in it."



Why Jesus is Better Than Santa Claus

By Rev. James Spellman of Ohio

- *Santa lives at the North Pole... JESUS is everywhere.
 - *Santa rides in a sleigh... JESUS rides on the wind and walks on the water.
 - *Santa comes but once a year... JESUS is an ever present help.
 - *Santa fills your stockings with goodies... JESUS supplies all your needs.
 - *You have to wait in line to see Santa... JESUS is as close as the mention of His name.
 - *Santa lets you sit on his lap... JESUS lets you rest in His arms.
 - *Santa doesn't know your name, all he can say is "Hi little boy or girl, what's your name?"... JESUS knew our name before we did. Not only does He know our name, He knows our address too. He knows our history and future and He even knows how many hairs are on our head.
 - *Santa has a belly like a bowl full of jelly... JESUS has a heart full of love.
 - *All Santa can offer is HO HO HO... JESUS offers health, help and hope.
 - *Santa says "You better not cry"... JESUS says "Cast all your cares on me for I care for you."
 - *Santa's little helpers make toys... JESUS makes new life, mends wounded hearts, repairs broken homes and builds mansions.
 - *Santa may make you chuckle but...JESUS gives you a joy that is your strength.
 - *While Santa puts gifts under your tree... JESUS became our gift and died on the tree.
- Its obvious there is really no comparison! Jesus is still the reason for the season. Yes, Jesus is better, he is even better than Santa Claus.



And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling

clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. 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 good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, 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 of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. Luke 2:1-16

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"I'm very pleased with the activities that my dad can participate in. He cannot drive, but he can get out and participate in choir and bible studies, etc." Lisa McMurray

Merry Christmas +
Happy New Year! Janelle

Merry, Merry
Christmas! Joan

God
Bless
Merry
Christmas

Merry Christmas
Steve McDonald

Merry
Christmas!
-erin ♡

Have a Blessed
Holiday Season
Terri

Happy &
New
Year
2018

Merry
Christmas!
Rebekah

Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year
Love, Donna

Merry
Christmas
Dad bless!
Kum
Janee God Bless all
Demi watch em
Loretta Goodman

Merry Christmas
+ Happy New
Year
Love
Alicia
Theresa

Merry Christmas
to
Ros Durham
Joy to you @
MAS
Joy

Happy Holidays!
mcD
Joy

Merry Christmas
+ Happy New Year!
Angie Davis

Merry Christmas and a
Happy New Year
-Mayer-

Merry Christmas
+ Happy New Year!
Love
Dana R.
(nursing)

Merry Christmas!
Annette

Wishing you all a Very
Merry Christmas and a
Happy 2018!
April