



THE WESTBROOK CHATTERBOX

Happy December and Merry Christmas!!!

It's Christmas time!! I love Christmas!! All the lights on houses and trees and of course, the trees themselves!! It's so much fun to drive around and look at the lights and decorations.

For me Christmas is about family. I love spending time with my family. On Christmas Eve, whoever is available gets together and decorates sugar cookies and then we get to open one present.

Christmas is also about giving. I love buying gifts to give to my family and friends. It's so much fun to watch their faces as they open their gifts. But the greatest gift ever given is the real meaning of Christmas. God sent his son, Jesus, born of a virgin, to become the Savior of the world. What an amazing gift!

This year, as a facility, we thought it would be fun to share that spirit of giving with others. We are adopting two families in need and providing gifts. We were given the names of a family with eight children - ages 3 to 15 - and a family with two children - aged 16 & 18 plus lists of needed/wanted items. We also have the name of a Kearney senior citizen in need of help with groceries. We will be collecting money from any staff member or resident who feels led to help with this cause. You can donate as little or as much as you want. Once we have the donations, we will go shopping and buy presents for each person.

If you would like to help, please give your donation to April, Janelle or Joan. The deadline to contribute is December 12th. We will have a wrapping party as part of the afternoon activity, "Santa Claus" Shaver and the Spirit of Giving, on December 16th. There is no pressure to participate. This is an opportunity to give for those who enjoy giving!

Stop the Presses....the staff is having a Christmas Tree decorating contest. Each department (Nursing, Housekeeping, Dietary, Maintenance and Back Office) will be assigned a tree to decorate as their team chooses. Every staff member is supposed to make a decoration that reflects them and has their name on it. The Social Room tree is not part of this contest. So be sure to wander the facility, check out how each tree is decorated and try to find all 26 staff decorations.

As December winds down, we will see the old year out with our annual New Year's Eve Party. This year's theme is Country Hoedown. So make plans now to get all gussied up, don those cowboy hats and get ready for a boot stompin' good time! The party will start at 6:00pm and we'll ring the New Year in by 8:00pm!

Until Next Year -
Janelle



A Reflection on Christ's Birth by Martha Armstrong

I've been thinking of the wonderful story of our Savior's birth. I want to share some thoughts from a book I have had for over 20 years....and yet every year I return to it to remind me of what it must have been like for Mary and Joseph.

In the world's eyes, Mary wasn't much...a poor peasant girl,

no more than twelve or fourteen in a no place village. But she was willing to submit herself completely to the Lord. We can only imagine how Mary felt when Gabriel appeared to her. If Mary was surprised by the initial greeting, how much more by the announcement itself! Gabriel's words were shocking! "But the angel said to her, Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus." What a thunder bolt!

From ground level, Joseph and Mary were insignificant nobodies from a nothing town. They were peasants. They were poor, uneducated or no account. They appeared to be helpless pawns caught in the movements of secular history. The Messiah had to be born in tiny, insignificant Bethlehem. As the virgin traveled, she bore under her steady beating heart, hidden from the world, the busy thumping heart of God.

The journey left Mary increasingly weary as she trod those dusty miles to the south. And when they arrived in Bethlehem, they were exhausted....especially Mary. And then the pains began..... Perhaps at first young Mary wasn't sure and didn't say anything to Joseph. But then, when there was no doubt that it was the real thing, she informed him.

On that cold day when the expectant parents arrived, nothing at all was available, not even a stall. So it was in the common courtyard attended by Joseph that Mary gave birth. If we imagine that it was into a freshly swept, County Fair stable that Jesus was born, we miss the whole point. It was wretched....scandalous! There was sweat and pain and blood and cries as Mary reached to the stars for help. The earth was cold and hard. The smell of birth was mixed into a wretched bouquet with the stench of manure and acrid straw. Trembling carpenter's hands, clumsy with fear, grasped God's Son slippery with blood...the baby's limbs waving helplessly as if falling through space. His face grimacing as he gasped the cold and his cry pierced the night...his mother groaned and his father wept. Into the dangerous world, He leapt. It was a leap down...as if the Son of God rose from His splendor, stood poised at the rim of the universe, and dove headlong, speeding through the stars, over the Milky Way to earth's galaxy, finally past Arcturus, where He plunged into a huddle of animals. Nothing could be lower. Luke finishes the picture, "She wrapped him in strips of cloth and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." Mary counted his fingers. She and Joseph wiped him clean as best they could by firelight, and Mary wrapped each of his little round, steaming arms and legs with strips of cloth. No one helped her. She laid him in a feeding trough.

The Son of God was born into the world not as a prince but as a pauper.

This article appeared in the LaPlata Home Press on December 17 1925. I am unable to print the entire article but be sure to join us on December 16th at 1:30pm. We will be talking more about "Santa Claus" Shaver, the spirit of giving and get to see an actual gift that he delivered!!

I have seen Santa Claus – seen him and talked to him. And he is a farmer. He isn't a fat, roly-poly old fellow, nor has he long, bushy white whiskers. He is a very long, very thin smooth-faced man, six feet six inches tall and only weighs about 160 pounds. His name is Raleigh A. Shaver. He lives at the edge of Plattsburg, MO, and feeds lots of cattle.

He can't be the real Santa Claus? Well, you couldn't tell that to any school youngster in Clinton County. They called him "Santa" Shaver and Mr. "Rol" Shaver, but they know he's a real Santa Claus just the same.

About the last week in November every year Mr. Shaver starts out. Months before then he has been getting ready. No swift reindeers end his task in a single night. He rides a rough motor truck over poor roads for weeks. By Christmas Day, he has visited every one of the 63 schools in Clinton County and has left a present for each of the 2,000 pupils. One year, stormy weather made the roads so bad the truck couldn't go and he didn't finish by Christmas. But he kept right on in a spring wagon until in February the last happy youngster had his gift.

"Santa" Shaver doesn't wear a red coat and cotton whiskers, with pillows stuffed over his tummy, when he goes to the schoolhouses. He doesn't come bouncing in with a jingling pack over his shoulder to pass around oranges and sacks of candy. He stalks in, with somebody to help carry a big wooden trunk up to the front of the room. From it he spreads out an alluring array of real presents, a sample of each kind he has in stock. Three by three the pupils go up and pick out the present they want, and one like is brought in from the truck.

These presents cost Mr. Shaver an average of more than \$2 a piece at wholesale prices – articles that would retail at from \$3.50 upwards. Some cost him \$2.25 wholesale. He spent more than \$4,000 last year, and six years of being Santa Claus has cost him \$25,000.

Must be a very rich man to do that. Well, there the most remarkable part of the story. Mr. Shaver is not a very rich man. He is of course pretty well off as most of us figure this world's goods. He owns 1,400 acres of land. But, especially in the recent lean years for cattle feeders, he has spent most of this income playing Santa Claus. Just for one funny little reason too.

I asked Mr. Shaver what he gave the children. For answer, he took me down into his big dry cellar into a room where were piled dozens of packing boxes and wooden trunks. He opened one of the trunks and began to display the contents of the packages it held. I knew then why "Santa" Shaver should be king of the whole known world, if he wanted to be, and the boys and girls of Clinton County, could do the voting. However, political "pie" doesn't seem to appeal to him.

There were ice skates, footballs, roller skates, catchers' mitts, railroad trains, scooters, steamboats. There were big beautifully dressed "ma-ma" dolls; manicure sets, doll cabs, brush, comb & mirror sets, vanity cases and bags, lovely boxes of stationary and standard fountain pens, watches, big he jack knives, tennis rackets, clocks, toy furniture sets – the big kind that you can really use – harmonicas, zithers, little trunks and suit cases, regular tool chests, stout sleds, building toys, flashlights, automobiles, tractors, funny mechanical toys, real air guns – not a cheap unsubstantial, flimsy article in the lot, and I haven't mentioned everything either.

I looked and looked until a strange thought dawned. "Mr. Shaver," I said, "there isn't a single necessary thing here, hardly anything you would call useful or that boys and girls have to have."

"No, sir," he replied, and he said it emphatically. "And there never will be!"

"I used to take along useful presents, gloves and sweaters, caps and mufflers, and lot of such junk. One boy would come and take a sled and be happy. A girl would come and get a doll and be tickled all over. Another boy would come up and gets a pair of skates and go back to his seat grinning. Then the next boy would walk slowly past the sleds and skates and knives and at last take a sweater. He would try to smile but his heart was not in it. His parents had coached him to select something useful. He didn't want something useful; he wanted something he could have fun with. So I just decided I would remove temptation by not taking practical gifts anymore."

DECEMBER

FOR UNTO US
a child is born,
UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN:
AND THE GOVERNMENT SHALL
BE UPON HIS SHOULDER.
AND his name shall be called:
A WONDERFUL
COUNSELLOR,
THE mighty God,
THE EVERLASTING FATHER,
THE PRINCE OF PEACE.
ISAIAH 9:6

Prince of Peace
Yahweh Light
Word Savior
Wonderful
Messiah
Christ Life King of Kings
I AM
Alpha and Omega
Counselor Immanuel
Truth
CREATOR

O HOLY
Night
the STARS
are brightly
SHINING
It is the night of
our dear
Saviors
BIRTH

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and 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 among those with whom he is pleased!"



Stories of Parents Who Knew What Was Important at Christmas

The Forgotten Present

I was about 8 years old and it was a couple days after Christmas. My mother had found a present she had bought for me in her closet. Instead of just giving it to me and have that be that, she snuck out on our back deck and threw it on the roof. My parents called me out and showed me this gift, and my dad got a ladder and spotted me while I got it down. I still remember the butterflies thinking, *Wow he really came!* Santa was up on this roof and this fell out of the sleigh!" The gift was a pink Barbie camera. I'll never forget that feeling. —Submitted by katiec41ae5b7ad

A Christmas Computer Game

Before there were websites that allowed you to track Santa's progress, my dad, a computer programmer, made up a program on our home computer that allowed us to follow Santa across the globe on Christmas Eve. He even made it so that phrases would pop with my name or my brother's. It's probably been more than 10 years since we've done that, but I still remember it being one of the things I looked forward to most. —Submitted by Julie7594

Time With Mum

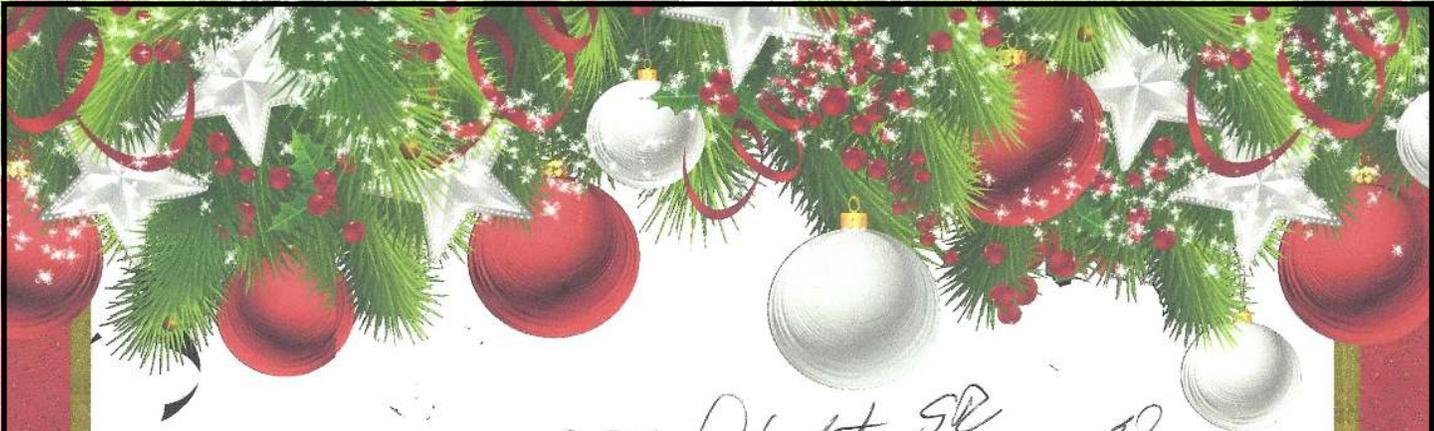
I am one of seven children, and have never had much alone time with my mum. Every Christmas, we would go down to my gran's house around the corner for the huge family Christmas party on Christmas Eve. Mum was also one of seven, so I'd see my huge number of cousins and aunts and uncles and get presents and sing songs. It was such a warm, loving atmosphere, but one Christmas when I was little, I got quite sick with a fever. As a result, I couldn't go to the party and I was miserable. Mum stayed behind to look after me that Christmas. I remember laying on the couch under the Christmas tree, Mum playing carols quietly on the record player. It was just her and me, and she made me my own special dinner because I was ill and let me open one of my Christmas presents early. It was my first Ken doll (before that I used an 11-inch C3PO toy to date my Barbie dolls). I had such a nice time with her. ♥—Submitted by Nancy L

Catching Santa Claus

One Christmas morning my parents woke my siblings and I up and told us they had secretly videotaped Santa last night and we just HAD to see it. At this point we had started to question if Santa was real or not, but when we saw that video of Santa putting gifts under the tree and eating the cookies we left, any doubt we had was gone! Years later we found out that my parents had found a Santa suit at the store and stayed up all night recording the video. We still talk about that video every year at Christmas and it is definitely something I plan on doing with my kids! —Submitted by Ahmba25

The Brownies Sash

A few years ago I participated in a storytelling project in the month of December. The theme of the event was "gifts" and I told the story of how I had received a Brownies uniform and manual from my grandparents for my 14th birthday, granting me the opportunity to be in a troop, only to be faced with a horrible troop leader who freely told the other girls that she didn't like me and would only hand out badges on days when I wasn't there. My story concluded with revealing that after one year in Brownies, I only had one badge. All the other girls moved on to the next level of Girl Scouts... I did not. My mother was at the storytelling event and two weeks later for Christmas, she handed me a small gold box. Inside was a Brownies sash, adorned with every single badge a girl could earn and accompanied by a three-page letter explaining how I had earned them. I was so touched, I cried. It was the most beautiful and thoughtful gift I ever received. —Submitted by misslisa



Janelle
Fred M. Wetters Sr
Becky, duzz Morina
Rinehart
Hanna
Dona Rinkenbaugh

Joan
Leppy Delpas
Joy Crawford

Curtis M. Rinkenbaugh Jr
Cary Rinkenbaugh Jr

Rick Hains!
Merry Christmas
Love you
Jules
Richard
Victoria Satterna

Afia
Steve
Mrs. Donald
Angie Davis
Marcha armstrong
William Niede
Jesse

Joyce
Amy
H. M. Hunter
Jill
Jill Simmons
April

Merry Christmas From All of Us to All of You!!