

# Yuletide customs: all part of the fun!

"Ho! Ho! Ho! Meeerrrry Christmas everybody!" shouts Santa Claus from his toy-laden sleigh as he deposits each family's gifts down the chimney. He does his job quickly then, off he goes, powered by a pack of eight reindeer. (Can anyone recount them? There's Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen.)

Retelling Christmas legends of St. Nick and his reindeer and sharing memories of Christmases past, especially those of childhood, renew the joyous spirit of each holiday season. Tradition, the continuity of customs from one year to the next, surrounds each family like a warm security blanket.

In many homes, parents try to persuade the children that Santa Claus actually paid them a visit.

The afternoon before Christmas, Mom and the youngsters bake sugar and anise cookies and place a few on a plate for Santa. Hours later, after a festive meal, and a long wait by the window for signs of Santa, the kids are sent to bed. The moment they're tucked in, another relative rings bells on the roof, by the chimney opening, sounding as if Santa's sleigh had pulled up.

### A sly "Santa"

Later, a dedicated Dad pulls a sled across the backyard leaving "sleigh" tracks and "Santa's" footprints in the snow. Then one or two of the cookies are munches; sometimes one is half-eaten showing Santa's particular preferences.

Presents under the tree, gifts peeking out of stockings hung over the fireplace and the few remaining cookies and sleigh tracks, sure signs that Santa visited, send squeals of glee upon discovery.

Children, anxious to open the pretty packages under the tree, are usually restricted to peeking into their stockings and opening the contents: The large gifts remained wrapped until the entire family has eaten a leisurely breakfast.

These families who hadn't read the Christmas story, Luke, Chapter 2, on Christmas Eve, did so after break-

fast. After all, the religious element is what is bringing the family together! Then, the fun begins.

Truly, gift-opening and seeing what everybody has received, is the most exciting for the children.

### Contagious delight

Did Santa read the gift request list? Did he comply? Parents, grandparents and other relatives share in the contagious joy and delight as ribbons and colored paper accumulate in an ever-mounting pile.

From the trimming of the Christmas tree with miniature toys; animals, bells and tinsel, to the Christmas carolers singing door to door, spreading good cheer, Christmas is a time of joy and love.

Reminiscing of Christmases past while sipping eggnog after returning from Christmas Mass, until the early hours of the morning, bonds the adult family members, as they try to catch up with the news of the year from friends and acquaintances.

And, inevitably, somebody sneaks away to dress in a red suit, stuffed with towels and pillows found in a nearby closet and the curly white beard carried along.

Walking around the back of the house and waving through the window, the sleepy people try to figure out who is missing. Or, was it really Santa? "Ho! Ho! Ho! Happy holiday!"

# For party pizzazz, gather round piano

For millions of Americans, the holiday season means getting together with friends and gathering around a piano to sing carols or "golden oldies."

The National Piano Manufacturers Association recently asked some piano-owning party givers for their tips on using the instrument at holiday festivities:

To persuade your guests to actually play your piano, Peter Kountz of Rochester, N. Y., says the key is to "place the piano in a prominent spot, looking like it's frequently played. Guests will ignore a piano in the corner with the keys covered — a piano should be a part of the life of the home."

Inviting at least one musical guest to each party is a solution recommended by Andy Tecson of Philadelphia: "From there on, it isn't hard to get people to play. People at parties like to forget their inhibitions and get up to perform."

The choice of holiday music is easy enough, but what other kinds of music should be played? John and Priscilla Cain of Oak Park, Ill., put a white grand piano in their art deco apartment and their guests sing golden oldies by Jerome Kern, Rodgers and Hart, and George Gershwin.

Other parties in other settings would suggest different music, and the Cains believe that every host and hostess should be sensitive to the musical tastes of the guests.

To avoid making the pianist sing solos, Sandy Shire of Los Angeles suggests obtaining several copies of various carol books and placing them on the piano. "That way, people are more likely to sing than if the hostess tries to coax them."

Sometimes the problem is not getting holiday guests to play — it's getting them to stop. "If someone hogs the piano or isn't very good, the host or hostess should cut them off," says Bob Daily of Northfield, Minn.

# Don't let a Scrooge steal your Christmas

There's nothing like Christmas. The tree. The anticipation. The friends and family. The presents. The snow, or the hoping for snow to make it all official. The feeling that everything will really be all right. The memories, reflections and dreams of Christmases past, when we were all so young.

But, for some people, Christmas is just an especially good time for exploiting other people. For them, Christmas is a time for taking, a time for making what's yours, theirs. And their idea of a perfect holiday season, a special moment to remember, could mean the wrecking of your holiday season and the spoiling of your moment to remember.

They are the crooks, criminals, burglars, the modern-day Scrooges who can steal your Christmas, if you let them.

"For obvious reasons, people are very relaxed and trusting during Christmas. After all, it's a time of celebration and affection. Crime and prevention seem to have no place in such an idyllic setting," says R.B. Carey, Jr., President and Chief Executive Officer of ADT, a leading security system manufacturer.

"But the unhappy fact is that Christmas is a time of great opportunity for the professional burglar. He knows your guard is down."

One of the most effective ways to deal with Christmas crime is to have a modern, electronic security system installed in your home. It can

**'Twas the night before Christmas  
When all through the house  
Not a creature was stirring  
Except for one louse  
Who entered a home  
That hadn't a prayer  
Of preventing his stealing  
Whatever was there.**

**He took the best presents from under the tree  
He took the silverware  
He took the TV  
A typewriter, a radio went into the sack  
That he casually slung over his back  
But not before throwing a butt on the rug  
And snickering slyly  
"Bah . . . Bah Humbug!"**

go a long way in preventing an event that could take the happy right out of your holiday.

Such a system can provide you with a burglary and automatic fire alarm, and can connect your home to a central monitoring station. The monitoring station staff will be alerted to any problem your security system detects, and will immediately contact the police or fire department.

A friend, relative or neighbor can also be called. Very reassuring if you're Christmasing out of town and can't be reached.

"Christmas is an extremely happy fact of life; crime isn't," says Carey. "But it's there and it can be effectively deterred through modern technology."

"Electronic, computerized

home security is part of that technology. Moreover, protecting our family and our property with the best technology available is just plain good sense. And good sense is as American as a merry Christmas."

For a free brochure on how to protect your home from criminals, write Richard Simonetti, Marketing Manager, Residential Security Systems, c/o ADT, Dept. M, One World Trade Center, New York, NY 10048.

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