

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS



Cloistered Nativity

Sister Mary Stephen Heffer, OP, sits next to her handiwork — a complete Nativity scene done in macrame. Sister Mary Stephen completed last year the more-than-two-dozen figures, including camels, wisemen, shepherds and their sheep, trees, Joseph, Mary and Jesus, and even the stable. Right, some of the figures close up show the detail in workmanship. Sister Mary Stephen is a member of the Dominican Nuns of the Perpetual Rosary living in the Monastery of Mary the Queen, Elmira.



Sarah Child



All in the Family

Christmas Pastime: Snooping

The period just before Christmas is a delicious time for children — full of mystery and anticipation and characterized by furtive attempts to discover the hiding places where a present or two might be stashed.

Since our children have yet to be caught reading this column I can admit to having conducted a few searches of my own in days gone by.

Nearly all of the items purchased as gifts arrived at our house on the hill in mail order dress, huge packages swathed in brown paper and corded in twine. My mom would sometimes make a trip or two to shop in Olean some 40 miles over the hills across the state line, but the roads were never predictable and mail order was by far the safer method.

Similarly, gifts from relatives arrived in the same guise but we knew that underneath the brown paper there was shiny red paper, silver bows and stickers bearing Santa's likeness and our names. The sight of the mailman was enough to make one's heart beat faster.

I think today's kids believe that Santa is in cahoots with the department stores. In my day we *knew* the postal system was but another division of Santa's elves.

A good many things ordered from Sears Roebuck

or Montgomery Ward did not fit or the color was wrong or the item was not as described in the catalogue.

There would be much moaning and gnashing of teeth by Mom on Christmas morning when something was not right. It meant bundling everything back up and sending for an exchange but unless it was something terribly important like ice skates or a fur-trimmed parka it only meant that in another couple of weeks another brown package would be arriving and we would have a second Christmas.

My mother did not have a closet with a lock on it but she had a cedar chest in her bedroom. Last minute arrivals were often put in there, especially gifts from my Aunt Madeline, who was a WAVE and single and had an excellent notion of what a gift should be.

I was about 8 the year I found red satin scuffs trimmed with the softest, most glorious red feathers — a pair each for me and my younger sister Thom.

Another year she sent a turquoise velveteen jumper and quite a few years later an enchanting aquamarine bedside clock made of tinted glass through which I could view the works.

I don't know when I stopped "snooping." Mom's catch-all term for any kind of reconnaissance. Maybe it was the year she handed me the key to the cedar chest and said if I wanted to spoil Christmas for myself it was up to me. Somehow, that took all the fun out of it.



Calendar

BABES IN TOYLAND — Presented by The Children's

Repertory Company of the Rochester Association of the Performing Arts, 8 p.m., Dec. 17, 18, 26, 27 and 28 at the RAPA Playhouse. Tickets are \$3; information can be obtained by calling 265-9855.

SENIOR MATINEES — Christmas party and showing of "Miracle on 34th

Street" starring Maureen O'Hara and John Payne, 1:30 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 16, George Eastman House.

AUDITIONS — To select a man and a woman for parts in GVA production of "The Fourposter Bed" 7 p.m., Jan. 4, 5 and 6. For further information call RAPA, 265-9855.

EXHIBITION — "The Mortimer Brandt Collection of Medieval Manuscript Illuminations," on view until Jan. 16, The Memorial Art Gallery.

THEATER — "Winnie the Pooh" 2 p.m., Dec. 18, 19, 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30, main auditorium, Nazareth College Arts Center.



Skating Know-How

John Simon, a figure skating professional, instructs a group class of Robbie, Tom and Holly Fromberger of St. Louis School in Pittsford, and Erica Eichelberger of St. Pius Tenth School. A Learn-to-Skate Mini-Camp will be held Dec. 26-31 by the Skating Institute of Rochester. Further information and preregistration is available by calling 325-2216.

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