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Volume 20, Issue 24

"The Little Green Paper"

December 20, 2019

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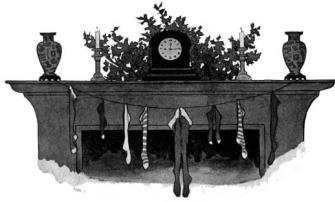
"Fear not for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior; which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: You shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" (Luke 2:11-12).

Twas the Night Before Christmas: A Visit from St. Nicholas

Twas the night before Christmas,
when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not
even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the
chimney with care
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon
would be there;



The children were nestled
all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-
plums danced in their
heads;
And mamma in her ker-
chief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap,



When out on the lawn there
arose such a clatter,
I sprang from the bed to see
what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew
like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and
threw up the sash.



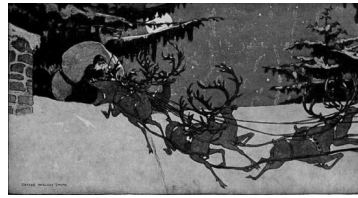
The moon on the breast
of the new-fallen snow
Gave the lustre of mid-
day to objects below,
When, what to my won-
dering eyes should ap-
pear,
But a miniature sleigh,
and eight tiny reindeer,



With a little old driver, so
lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must
be St. Nick.
More rapid than eagles his
coursers they came,
And he whistled, and
shouted, and called them by
name:



Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen!
On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Donder and Blitzen!
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"



As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky;
So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,
With the sleigh full of Toys, and St. Nicholas too.

And then, in a twinkling, I
heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of
each little hoof.
As I drew in my head, and
was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicho-
las came with a bound.



He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;
A bundle of Toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.

His eyes—how they twin-
kled! his dimples how mer-
ry!
His cheeks were like roses,
his nose like a cherry!
His droll little mouth was
drawn up like a bow,
And the beard of his chin
was as white as the snow;



The stump of a pipe he held tight in
his teeth,
And the smoke it encircled his head
like a wreath;
He had a broad face and a little
round belly,
That shook when he laughed, like a
bowlful of jelly.



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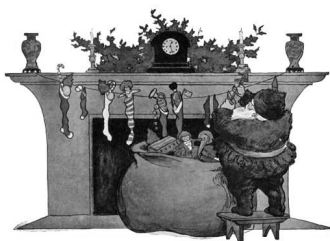
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He was chubby and plump, a
right jolly old elf,
And I laughed when I saw
him, in spite of myself;
A wink of his eye and a
twist of his head,
Soon gave me to know I had
nothing to dread;



He spoke not a word, but
went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings;
then turned with a jerk,
And laying his finger aside
of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the
chimney he rose;



He sprang to his sleigh, to his
team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew like
the down of a thistle.
But I heard him exclaim, ere
he drove out of sight,
"Happy Christmas to all, and
to all a good-night."



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Back To Normal



My grandmother died a week and a half away from her favorite holiday (Christmas) and we thought that things were at their worst. We were eating in complete silence and all of a sudden my grandfather said the simplest thing: **that he was grateful for us being there.** That week was the hardest week of my life and I still remember it vividly, but that Christmas **when my Grandpa said those words I thought that things could go back to normal.**

Random Act of Kindness

I was about 10 and my family was really struggling financially. **It was a few days before Christmas and a stranger rang the doorbell and handed my dad a wrapped box.** We all sat at the table and my parents opened it to find an envelope full of cash, as well as gift cards for myself and my three siblings. My parents asked all around to try to find out who did it but to this day we don't know. **It's touching to know people do things like this not for praise but out of the goodness of their hearts.**

DATA MASTER: Steven Burdick

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The Laundromat



All throughout my childhood there was a homeless man who slept in our local laundromat. Every Thanksgiving and Christmas my mom would cook a big spread and we would take him a heaping plate and I insisted on hugging him. It is one of my favorite memories, and probably one of the reasons I ended up in school for social work.

The Cabbage Patch Kid

I was 6 years old, my parents were getting a divorce, and my mom was pregnant with my little brother, so things were really rocky for us. On Christmas Eve my mom got a phone call, and the woman on the phone said they had heard we were having a tough time and asked if it would be OK if Santa came to visit. We lived in a tiny town so my mom wasn't too surprised that people knew what was going on. A little later we heard bells and down the road came a horse-drawn carriage with a real-life Santa! He came in and gave me a Cabbage Patch Kid doll — it was the '80s. To this day we still don't know who Santa was or who called my mom. Every year I send a little thank-you by trying to do something special for someone else who needs it. They taught me what Christmas is really all about and I never get tired of seeing other people's faces light up when I have been able to be their Santa.

DATA MASTER: Eric Peachey

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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.

A Trip Overseas

My dad's side of the family is from England, but my family lives in California. Tradition every year is to open one gift on Christmas Eve, so once when I was 12, my mom gave me this really light box to open. I opened it and it was just a piece of paper...until I read it. It said that I was going to England first thing in the morning with my dad. Best gift ever! **I missed my family so much, and we even got to surprise most of them when we showed up at the annual family Boxing Day party. Truly grateful.**

Letters From Santa

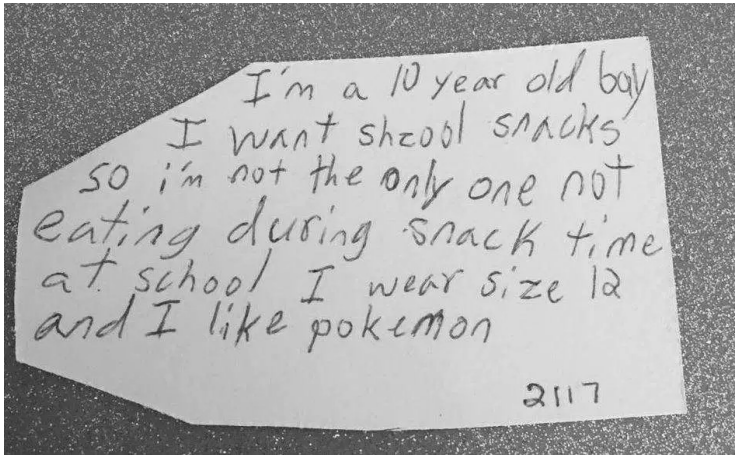
My most heartwarming holiday memory is when my third-grade teacher gave each student in our class a personalized letter from Santa. I remember after we all got the letters, we came into school the next day really freaking excited that **SANTA WROTE TO US, and we couldn't stop telling our teacher about how Santa sent us letters.** It always brings a smile to my face when I remember that time.

The Co-Worker

One year when I was younger, my parents were struggling financially. One of the ladies my mom works with asked my mom what my brother and I wanted for Christmas. My mom told her, and the lady bought exactly what we wanted and gave it to my parents to give to us Christmas morning. To this day my brother still says it was the best Christmas present ever, and it wasn't until a couple years ago that my mom told us it was her co-worker that bought us the toys to give us from Santa. **We may not have had a Christmas that year if it wasn't for her generosity.**

DATA MASTER: Breanna McDowell

Sharing The Love Of The Season



During this frantic season, I often stop and reflect on the abundance all around me, as well as the abundance in my own life. I have enough, I have shelter, food, clothing, family and friends to love and be loved by. I don't need, or want, more things. And that goes for most of the people I know. So, a small thing I do every year is to sign-up with a local service organization and "adopt" children to shop for. These children are victims of domestic violence who otherwise would have a very meager Christmas. Their wishes are never extensive and usually include clothing sizes and favorite colors. I like to think of this as a way of showing families in need that others care about them and to give out a little extra love. An added bonus is that the shopping experience is a lot more enjoyable.

Source: Kind Spring – Small Acts That Change The World
By: Novice50
Website: <https://www.kindspring.org/story/view.php?sid=177578>

DATA MASTER: Nikki Hamilton

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The Christmas Cat



As a child, like most any child, I always wanted a kitten. My mom would never hint at getting me one, but if I queried, "Mom, can I have a kitten yet?" it would be followed up with typical Mom Speak: "Are you ready to handle the responsibility?" Of course, the answer was, always, that I could.

Christmas Eve 1992: My mom was out of the house, but it did not seem odd to me — like any other day, errands need to be completed. It was about 11:30 in the morning, and my mom came in the front door of the house carrying a cardboard box. "Allison, come here," she said as I curiously made my way over. She put the box on the ground, and I saw this little black and white paw stick out of the box. What was my reaction? Joy? Elation? Excitement that my wish was finally coming true? None of the above.

"I CAN'T HANDLE THE RESPONSIBILITYYYYYY!!!!!"

Though the shock hit me like a ton of bricks as an 8-year-old, I had Kevin (his name, after Kevin McCallister from the Home Alone films) for 17 years, as he died after a good, hearty life on Aug. 30, 2009 — a date I can't forget. I was, of course, sad at the time, but so happy I had him. **My baby Kevin was the best Christmas present I've ever received. He brought me pure joy.** Every Christmas, I remember him fondly with a big smile on my face.

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 C3P0 toy to date my Barbie dolls). I had such a nice time with her.

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.**

The Orange

When I was 6 years old or so I received an orange from my great-grandmother. I didn't understand why someone had given me fruit for Christmas, until I learned many years later that this was my great-grandma's favorite gift when she was a kid in the 1910s... **It was her tradition and her way to remind us that small things could make us happy.**

Teachers Are the Best People

One year, my family was going through a really hard time. My school was aware of this, and **during our middle school Christmas party, two of my teachers brought us clothes, food, and stockings. Our tree and counters were full.** My mom was crying when we got home because she wasn't expecting us to have Christmas at all.

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!

DATA MASTER: Karen Deffenbaugh

Christmas Carols

When I was little, my grandpa had cancer, and he and my grandma were too exhausted from all the treatments and emotions from the previous months to make the two-hour drive to Christmas with the rest of the family. So my mom arranged for us all to go over to their house instead, and we stood outside in their yard singing Christmas carols. **I'll never forget the look on my grandma's face when she drew the curtains to see what was going on outside — it makes me tear up just to think about how excited she was.** My grandpa died a month later, but my grandma has always said how grateful she was that we didn't forget about him on what ended up being his last Christmas.

Together for Christmas

When my family was all able to get together for Christmas we always went to Christmas Eve mass. Although I don't really identify with any religion, Christmas Eve mass is beyond beautiful... the choir's voices were so lovely and strong that the whole building shook with song. My older brother wasn't going to be able to make it to Christmas because he lived too far away and it was just not the same Christmas Eve feeling as we stood there in our fancy holiday finest and sang carols...until my older brother walked in during "Angels We Have Heard on High." **He had driven for 13 hours straight to make it in time for the holiday. My whole family was crying and I will never forget how it felt: like my own little Christmas miracle.** For that reason I have always loved that song and it was so nice to have my Christmas wish come true. Merry Christmas, y'all!

Two Lives, Twice The Fortune



The evening of December 24, 2009, promised to be extra special for Mike and Tracy Hermanstorfer. Not only was it Christmas Eve, but, more importantly, they were about to have a baby. During labor, however, Tracy's heart suddenly stopped beating, followed by her breathing. The doctors were forced to react quickly: they had little time to save the baby.

They immediately performed an emergency C-section, but the Hermanstorfer baby, Coltyn, exhibited all the

wrong signs: he was limp, and his pulse and heartbeat were extremely weak, to the point that the whole room, including Mike, had little hope.

As the child remained unresponsive in his father's arms, another team attempted to resuscitate Tracy, who lay motionless on the hospital bed. But suddenly, as unexplainably as it had stopped minutes earlier, her heart started beating again. And as her life rekindled, so too did Coltyn's strength. His skin, once pale, flushed with color, and he started crying—showing everyone he was fine. Two lives, having almost gone through to the other side, amazingly came back.

To this day, no one can explain exactly what happened. Tracy was healthy and had no family history of heart disease. Her recovery, and that of Coltyn's, was as mysterious as her ailment. Whatever the answer ultimately is, that intense Christmas night will surely remind the Hermanstorfers that life is fragile but also wonderful and full of surprises.



Hatbox Baby



It was a normal Christmas Eve in 1931 when Ed and Julia Stewart's car broke down as they were driving home. Stuck in the middle of nowhere, seven miles west of Superior, Arizona, Ed tried to figure out what the problem was, while Julia wandered into the desert. There she came upon a lonely hatbox. Sensing something was out of place, she called Ed over and together found a baby inside. Abandoned and alone, the newborn girl seemed otherwise in good health. The couple managed to fix the car and took the baby to the authorities, who eventually put her up for adoption.

In the end, it was another couple, the Elliots, who adopted the girl, known by the media as "the hatbox baby." Faith, the adoptive mother, named her Sharon. The baby grew up to live a happy, healthy, and successful life.

DATA MASTER: Doug WM Stone

A Tree For Your Holiday



Christmas trees are an essential part of Christmas, and it's sad whenever any family is unable to get one—especially for the children. Such was the case for the Albert family during the Christmas of 1958, when unlucky circumstances seemed to conspire to deprive them of an evergreen fir that year. No vendor was to be found, no tree was available, and the Albert kids were devastated. The 3 and 4-year-olds had been looking forward to its decoration and to finding Santa's presents under it, but by Christmas Eve they had to face the fact that their hopes would go unfulfilled.

Suddenly, as they were driving home that night, a strong wind violently threw a tree in front of their truck. Looking to see if it belonged to anyone, or if it was for sale, Mr. Albert asked around town about it. No one was selling a tree that night, and it seemed to be free of any owner, so the family took it home. And sure, the children probably believed in miracles from then on.

Elementary Student with 'Nothing to Give' Gifts Her Teacher Cereal Marshmallows

On Dec. 19, Washington elementary school teacher Rachel Uretsky-Pratt shared a photo of cereal marshmallows in a Facebook post that has since gone viral – with more than 105,000 shares. That's because they came from a young student, who otherwise had "nothing to give."

"Today I received some chocolates, sweet handmade notes, some jewelry, but these Lucky Charm marshmallows stood out to me the most," Uretsky-Pratt wrote of her students' gifts on their last school day before holiday break.

She stressed that the present came from one little girl who "wanted to get m[e] something so badly, but had nothing to give."

"So rather than give me nothing, this student opened up

her free [school] breakfast cereal this morning, took the packaging of her spork, straw, and napkin, and finally took the time to take every marshmallow out of her cereal to put in a bag—for me," Uretsky-Pratt continued. It was a big sacrifice for her student because, as the teacher told USA Today, "No one likes Lucky Charms without the marshmallows."

She concluded: "Be grateful for what you have, and what others give you. It all truly comes from the deepest parts of their hearts."

DATA MASTER: Jennifer Dove

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Claremore Nursing Home - Employee of the Month



Employee Of The Month... Samantha Walker voted Employee of the Month by the residents. She was born in San Antonio, TX on November 15th. She has been a CNA here for 10 years. She has two daughters but no longer married. Her hobbies are fishing and swimming but really likes doing anything with her girls. Not many people knows she likes to paint and draw. We all know she loves to mow but only with a push mower. "I love the fact that Claremore Nursing Home feels like home and we work as a team."

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8-Year-Old Sends 500 Cards to Those in Nursing Homes, Foster Care

Adriana Pollock of Newark, Ohio, is handwriting 500 cards for those in local nursing homes and foster care in an effort to spread "Christmas joy."

"I thought that nursing homes and foster homes weren't having as good of Christmases as me and my sister so I thought that we should give them Christmas cards," Pollock remarked to the Newark Advocate. The third grader added, "Some people that don't have as good of Christmases don't have as much Christmas joy."

Last year she sent 400 cards, but this year she had more time – beginning in October and working on them after school, on the weekends, and even on days off at her grandma's house. She has some help too, from little sister Aria and from her community, which helped purchase some of the cards.

Inside, she writes messages like the following, "You might not know us but we love you."

For others who wish to do the same, local media are publicizing the addresses of a 12-year-old girl battling cancer and an 8-year-old boy suffering a terminal brain tumor after both wished that, for Christmas, Americans would send them cards.

Young Boy Unwraps Military Dad in Early Christmas Present

On Dec. 14, Jadin Hart from Pittsburgh tweeted a video of her nephew opening his most wished for Christmas gift – a box with his dad inside.

"My nephew got to unwrap the only Christmas gift he asked for a few days early and his reaction broke my heart," Hart typed.

After her nephew tentatively unwrapped the large box, his dad popped out. Instead of jumping back in surprise, he clung to his dad without letting go.

The video went viral, with more than 902,000 likes and shares from big names like talk show host Ellen DeGeneres, actor John Krasinski, and comedian James Corden.

"When my dad came back from serving in the gulf war I held him so tight as he walked off the coach at the

base. I couldn't let go," Corden commented. "This brought it all back. Thoughts are with every family missing loved ones this Christmas."

Kids with Down Syndrome Sign Michael Bublé Christmas Song

For Christmas 2018, Wouldn't Change a Thing, an organization dedicated to "creating a world where negative perceptions of Down's Syndrome are a thing of the past," organized a video of families singing (with sign language) Michael Bublé's rendition of "All I Want for Christmas Is You."

25 families of children with Down syndrome participated in the project, and later appeared as guests on British ITV show This Morning, the Mirror reported Dec. 13. During the show, they expected to watch the finished video for the first time – but not to also see a special message from the Canadian singer.

"When I heard that Wouldn't Change A Thing had chosen one of my songs to sign to, I was really moved by it," Bublé stressed at the beginning of their video. "It's absolutely beautiful."

In the film, those with Down syndrome – and their parents – sign along to the classic Christmas song while smiling next to their Christmas trees. As the song continues, the cameras revealed the families on the set of This Morning.

Bublé waved at the end, "Merry Christmas, everybody."

DATA MASTER: Heather Conn



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Rudolph: the marketing story behind the most famous reindeer



Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer is one of our favourite Christmas Songs, but did you know Rudolph was created for a marketing campaign in 1939, 10 years before the song, and his red nose was originally rejected?

Here's the story behind "the most famous reindeer of all".

Every year, a chain of US department stores called Montgomery Ward would buy thousands of colouring books to give away at Christmas. It was a successful marketing tactic that brought thousands of customers into their stores, especially the toy department, but it was also expensive. They wanted to cut costs so, in 1939, asked their in-house advertising copywriter, Robert L May, to come up with a Christmas giveaway. The brief was fairly simple: It had to appeal to children & adults, and be about an animal.

For inspiration, Robert L May drew on his own 4 year old daughter. She liked the deer at the zoo, and reindeer pull Santa's sleigh, so that was a start; Robert had been shy as a child, and other children would exclude him from their games so he liked the idea of an unpopular reindeer who wins in the end; After toying with the names Rollo & Reginald, he settled on the name Rudolph. Piece by piece the idea was taking shape.

Then, one foggy day, he was looking out of his office window and could see nothing except for some lights in the distance. Those lights were the inspiration for Rudolph's iconic red nose that would guide Santa's sleigh. Brilliant! But there was a problem. In the 1930's, a red nose was associated with chronic alcoholism and drunkenness, and Rudolph's defining feature was rejected by his bosses until they were eventually won over by illustrator Denver Gillen's cute character designs for Red Nosed Reindeer.

Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer proved so popular that Montgomery Ward stores distributed 2.4 million

copies in its first Christmas season. Then came the second world war, and restrictions on paper. The first reprint was in 1946, when another 3.6 million copies were snapped-up by Montgomery Ward shoppers.

The copyright for the poem was owned by Montgomery Ward but, in 1947, the president of the company, Sewell Avery, handed over the copyright to May for free. This quickly led to a successful spoken-word recording, and a best selling book.

It wasn't until 1948 that Robert L May's poem was adapted into the song that most of us know today. It was Robert's brother-in-law, Johnny Marks who adapted it and added the introduction:

"You know Dasher and Dancer and Prancer and Vixen, Comet and Cupid and Donner and Blitzen, but do you recall the most famous reindeer of all?"

This was a reference to Clement Clarke Moore's poem, A Visit from St. Nicholas, which was much better known at the time than Rudolph, and was a bit of brand association.

The song version of Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer was first released as a single by Gene Autry in 1949 and reached No. 1 in the US Charts, eventually selling a total of 12.5 million copies. Marks went on to write a sequel, Run Rudolph Run, that was popularized by Chuck Berry and he also penned the Christmas classic Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree, originally recorded by Brenda Lee.

So, 2019 marks Rudolph's 80th Birthday.

There's a lot more to the story of the low-paid advertising copywriter, Robert L May, including the effect of the Great Depression on his life, the sad death of his wife Evelyn, his fondness for limericks and children's stories (and much more) that's all well worth a Google, but I'll leave you with this:

Some people claim there's another reindeer mentioned in the song who was mean to poor Rudolph. Her name was Olive. Olive, the other reindeer, used to laugh and call him names.

This article was brought to you by the people at Narrative Industries, a Bedford-based web agency providing enterprise-level digital services. We know it isn't the usual approach to advertorial, but it's Christmas.

DATA MASTER: Jennifer Dove

Santa's Veterinarian Answers Kids' Questions about Santa's Reindeer

Q: Can reindeer really fly?

A: Most reindeer can't fly, but Santa's reindeer are special. Because they're magic, they can fly very high and very far without getting tired.

Q: How does Santa find the reindeer for his sleigh?

A: Reindeer live in arctic and subarctic climates, and Santa spends some of his "off-time" traveling to evaluate reindeer and find the truly gifted ones that can pull his sleigh. I often get to travel with Santa to make sure the reindeer are healthy.

Q: What does Santa feed them? How often do they eat?

A: Santa feeds them hay and reindeer feed, with the occasional graham cracker Christmas cookie as a treat. They also eat mosses, grass (when it's not covered with snow, that is!) and lichens. They get to eat the hay any time they want, but they get their reindeer feed twice a day.

Q: How much does a reindeer weigh?

A: The male reindeer usually weigh up to 450 pounds (205 kg), and the females weigh up to 250 pounds (114 kg). There have been some male reindeer that weighed in at 700 pounds (318 kg)!

Q: Do boy and girl reindeer grow antlers, or are they like deer in that only the boys grow antlers?

A: Both male and female reindeer grow antlers.

Q: How old is Rudolph?

A: Because he's magic, nobody really knows how old Rudolph is. He may even be as old as Santa, but I can tell you he's healthy and he can certainly keep up with the younger reindeer.

Q: Does Rudolph's nose really glow red?

A: Yes, but not all the time. You'll often see him looking like all the other reindeer, with a black nose, because he's learned how to control the glow.

Q: Why does Rudolph's nose glow red?

A: Rudolph actually has a medical condition called *nasus roseus* (pronounced "NAY-suss ROSE-ee-us") that makes his nose glow bright red like a light bulb. It doesn't hurt, though, so don't worry. And if you're familiar with the story of Rudolph, you'll know that his glowing nose makes it possible for Santa to complete his mission even in a blizzard or heavy fog.

Q: What are their teeth like? How many do they have? Are they sharp?

A: Like other ruminants (such as cattle, sheep, goats and deer), reindeer don't have incisor teeth on their upper jaw. They have what's called a 'dental plate,' which still allows them to bite off grass. Their premolar and molar teeth are made for grinding grass, hay, moss and lichen, and are very similar to the premolars and molars of grass-eating animals such as cows and horses. Reindeer have 34 teeth total, compared to 32 teeth in people.

Their incisor teeth (the ones in the front of their mouths) are made for cutting and tearing grass, so they're relatively sharp. Because their back teeth are made for grinding grass and roughage, they aren't sharp like a dog's or cat's teeth, but they can still hurt if they bite you. They don't have the sharp, pointy teeth that dogs and cats have.

Santa takes special care to make sure his reindeer's teeth stay healthy by having me give them regular dental exams and cleanings, just like your pet should have.

Q: Do they have to live in a barn to be protected from the cold at the North Pole?

A: Reindeer are used to cold weather, and actually prefer it, but even reindeer need protection from the elements at the North Pole. They get to live in a cozy barn during the coldest weather. When they're not in training for the sleigh pull, they get to spend time in a top-secret pasture area in a (slightly) warmer climate, where they get to have fun and graze on grass.

Q: Do they sleep during the day or at night? How do they stay up all night on Christmas?

A: Reindeer can sleep any time of the day, but Santa's reindeer generally sleep at night so they can train during the day – after all, they need to stay in shape to pull the sleigh for that long ride on Christmas Eve! As their special trip gets closer, their schedules are altered so they can be as rested as possible. Santa definitely makes sure that his reindeer are healthy and 100% ready and able to make that long flight.

Santa packs snacks and water for them so they don't get too hungry or thirsty on the trip, and so they can keep their energy up. Plus, they get to catch short naps on the rooftops while Santa's delivering the toys to all the good girls and boys.

Q: What are your duties as Santa's Official Veterinarian?

A: My primary duty is to make sure the reindeer are healthy throughout the year. Here are some of the things I do:

I examine the reindeer about a month before the scheduled flight to make sure that they're healthy and that they're not showing any signs of disease or other problems. It's important that they don't have any diseases they could give to other animals during their trip around the

world, and they need to be healthy so they're less likely to catch any diseases themselves on that flight.

Once I've made sure they're healthy, I fill out health certificates for the reindeer to make sure that Santa can legally fly them into the countries around the world and to prevent any unnecessary delays. The last thing we want is Santa getting stopped at a border, right?

Right before the trip, I give them a once-over again to make sure their feet and legs are healthy enough to take off and land on the rooftops and that they're still healthy and ready to go. I also do a nose-check on Rudolph to make sure he's ready to light up in case it's needed. During the trip, I'm on call in case there are any problems or emergencies that arise. Thankfully, Santa takes such good care of them that this has never happened.

Once they've completed their trip and returned to their home base, I give each one of them a good exam to make sure they didn't get any injuries and that they're not dehydrated or weak. I then help the elves feed the reindeer their post-trip treats and food and get them settled into their comfy stalls so they can rest.

In the spring and summer, I check up on them and give them the vaccines they need, as well as do any blood tests that are necessary.

DATA MASTER: Karen Deffenbaugh

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Merry Christmas

Remember that a gift should be treasured; not only the ones that are wrapped but ones that are bestowed upon you.

Years ago, there was a very wealthy man who, with his devoted young son, shared a passion for art collecting. Together, they traveled around the world, adding only the finest art treasures to their collection. Priceless works by Picasso, Van Gogh, Monet and many others adorned the walls of the family estate.

The widowed elder man looked on with satisfaction as his only child became an experienced art collector. The son's trained eye and sharp business mind caused his father to beam with pride as they dealt with art collectors around the world.

One year, as winter approached, war engulfed the nation, and the young man left to serve his country. After only a few short weeks, his father received a telegram. His beloved son was missing in action. The art collector anxiously awaited more news, fearing he would never see his son again. Within days, his fears were confirmed. The young man had died while rushing a fellow soldier to a medic.

Distraught and lonely, the old man faced the upcoming Christmas holidays with anguish and sadness. The joy of the season that he and his son had looked forward to would visit his house no longer.

On Christmas morning, a knock on the door awakened the depressed old man. As he walked to the door, the masterpieces of art on the walls only reminded him that his son was not coming home. As he opened the door, he was greeted by a soldier with a large package in his hands.

He introduced himself to the old man by saying, "I was a friend of your son. I was the one he was rescuing when he died. May I come in for a few moments? I have something to show you."

As the two began to talk, the soldier told of how the man's son had told everyone of his, not to mention his father's, love of fine art. "I am no artist," said the soldier, "but I want to give you this."

As the old man unwrapped the package, the paper gave way to reveal a portrait of the man's son. Though the world would never consider it the work of a genius, the painting featured the young man's face in striking detail.

Overcome with emotion, the man thanked the soldier,

promising to hang the picture above the fireplace. A few hours later, after the soldier had departed, the old man set about his task. True to his word, the painting went above the fireplace, pushing aside thousands of dollars worth of art. His task completed, the old man sat in his chair and spent Christmas gazing at the gift he had been given.

During the days and weeks that followed, the man realized that, even though his son was no longer with him, the boy would live on because of those he had touched. He would soon learn that his son had rescued dozens of wounded soldiers before a bullet stifled his caring heart.

As the stories of his son's gallantry continued to reach him, fatherly pride and satisfaction began to ease his grief. The painting of his son soon became his most prized possession, far eclipsing any interest in the pieces for which museums around the world clamored. He told his neighbors it was the greatest gift he had ever received.

The following spring, the old man became ill and passed away. The art world was in anticipation that the collector's passing and his only son dead, those paintings would be sold at auction. According to the will of the old man, all art works would be auctioned on Christmas Day, the day he had received the greatest gift.

The day soon arrived and art collectors from around the world gathered to bid on some of the world's most spectacular paintings. Dreams would be fulfilled this day; greatness would be achieved as many would claim, "I have the greatest collection."

The auction began with a painting that was not on any museum's list. It was the painting of the man's son. The auctioneer asked for an opening bid, but the room was silent. "Who will open the bidding with \$100?" he asked. Minutes passed, and no one spoke. From the back of the room came a voice, "Who cares about that painting? It's just a picture of his son." "Let's forget about it and move on to the good stuff," more voices echoed in agreement.

"No, we have to sell this one first," replied the auctioneer. "Now, who will take the son?" Finally, a neighbor of the old man spoke. "Will you take ten dollars for the painting? That's all I have. I knew the boy; so I would like to have it.

"I have ten dollars. Will anyone go higher?" asked the auctioneer. After more silence, the auctioneer said, "Going once, going twice, gone." The gavel fell.

Cheers filled the room and someone exclaimed, "Now we can get on with it and we can bid on the real treasures!" The auctioneer looked at the audience and announced that the auction was over.

Stunned disbelief quieted the room. Someone spoke up and asked, "What do you mean, it's over? We didn't come here for a picture of some old guy's son. What about all these paintings? There are millions of dollars worth of art here! I demand that you explain what is going on!"

The auctioneer replied, "It's very simple. According to the will of the father, whoever takes the son...gets it all."

Puts things into perspective, doesn't it? Just as those art collectors discovered on Christmas Day, the message is still the same: the love of a father, whose greatest joy came from his son who went away and gave his life rescuing others; and because of that father's love, whoever takes the Son gets it all.

In life, many things will catch your eye, but only a few will catch your heart.

DATA MASTER: Nikki Hamilton

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The Tradition of Mistletoe at Christmas



Mistletoe is a plant that grows on range of trees including willow, apple and oak trees. The tradition of hanging it in the house goes back to the times of the ancient Druids. It is supposed to possess mystical powers which bring good luck to the household and wards off evil spirits. It was also used as a sign of love and friendship in Norse mythology and that's where the custom of kissing under Mistletoe comes from.

When the first Christians came to Western Europe, some tried to ban the use of Mistletoe as a decoration in Churches, but many still continued to use it! York Minster Church in the UK used to hold a special Mistletoe Service in the winter, where wrong doers in the city of York could come and be pardoned.

The custom of kissing under Mistletoe comes from England. The original custom was that a berry was picked from the sprig of Mistletoe before the person could be kissed and when all the berries had gone, there could be no more kissing!

The name mistletoe comes from two Anglo Saxon words 'Mistel' (which means dung) and 'tan' (which means) twig or stick! So you could translate Mistletoe as 'poo on a stick'!!! Not exactly romantic is it!

Mistletoe was also hung on the old English decoration the Kissing Bough.

Did You Know?

- Mistletoe is normally spread on trees through bird poo and is actually a parasite! The plant attaches itself to the host tissue (a tree) and grows out of the branch.
- Mistletoe was a symbol of love and friendship in Norse mythology, which is where the practice of kissing under Mistletoe comes from.
- The name mistletoe derives from two Anglo Saxon words 'Mistel' (meaning dung) and 'tan' (meaning

twig or stick). So you might say mistletoe is 'poo on a stick' - not quite so romantic now, is it?

- Mistletoe promotes wildlife! Although it's poisonous to us, it provides a great source of food for many animals. Birds rely on the plant and butterflies lay their eggs on it and use the nectar. Bees also get important pollen from mistletoe.
- During the Medieval period, people believed mistletoe possessed mystical powers which could bring good luck to a family during December and ward off evil spirits and the devil. It was often used in ceremonies and burnt once Christmas was over.

DATA MASTER: Karen Deffenbaugh

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Up-coming Events

TOPS #570 We meet 9am to 11am Monday morning at Mt. Olive Lutheran Church in Miami 2337 N. Main St. "Taking off pounds sensibly!"

TOPS #567 meet every Thursday at 10am 433 N Mississippi in Nowata.

TOPS #506 in Miami Heavenly Winds Worship Center meet every 6pm Monday evening. For more info call Susan Walls at 918-540-0570

Every 4th Saturday of the month Veteran's Support Group: Veterans for Veterans. Have you served in the military? Are you struggling with readjustment? Anxious about the future? Struggling to connect with friends and family? Struggling with school? WE CAN HELP! Free veterans support group at 10am every 4th Saturday of the month. The Landing 502 West Corner Fairland, Ok. For more information call Larry Boyd (918) 541-7592 or Cindy (918) 676-3228.

Food Truck Wednesdays —Every Wednesday, grab some tasty eats and gather on the grounds of Guthrie Green. During Food Truck Wednesdays, lunchtime transforms into a community-wide affair, with roaming food trucks posting up at this Tulsa park. While you dine on delicious food, be sure to enjoy the live music and fresh air. Guthrie Green 111 E Brady St Tulsa, OK 74103 Phone: 918-574-2421

Chelsea Dance and Jam Session—Every Friday Night 6:00 pm—9:00 pm—Bring a dish for potluck at 6:30 pm. Musicians are welcome. Civic Center 618 Pine street Chelsea, OK 74016

Big Cabin Senior Exercise Program—Fitness program for seniors held at the Big Cabin Baptist Church gym three times a week, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, from 10 to 11 a.m.

American Legion Post 178 in Grove, OK – Bingo every Saturday evening at 6pm. Family atmosphere. Contact Lee Cathy for any questions at: 901-487-9060

PRYOR DANCE—Every 1st. and 3rd. Thursday of the month. 6:15 pm—9 pm—Cost is \$5.00 per person, Double H Band will be playing. Cookies and Coffee will be serving. It's for seniors but all ages are welcome. Mayes County Nutrition Center 851 SE 9th Pryor (just east of 9th and Elliott intersection)

Oct 18, 2019 - Dec 29, 2019 The Woolaroc Retrospective Exhibit & Sale - If you love art or just have a great appreciation for wildlife and nature, you won't want to miss out on this exciting exhibit on display at

SUDOKU PUZZLES

Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3X3 box accommodates the digits 1-9, without repeating any.

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By: Nikki Hamilton

Solutions are printed in page 36

Bartlesville's Woolaroc Museum this fall. Bringing together nine acclaimed landscape and wildlife artists from across the country, "The Woolaroc Retrospective Exhibit" will feature an impressive array of works. Woolaroc Museum & Wildlife Preserve 1925 Woolaroc Ranch Rd Bartlesville, OK 74006 Phone: 918-336-0307 Toll Free: 888-966-5276 Fax: 918-336-0084

Nov 08, 2019 - Dec 22, 2019 Blue Dome Pop-Up Shops - Get your holiday shopping fix at the Blue Dome District in downtown Tulsa during this series of pop-up markets featuring original works by local artists and hand-crafters. Each weekend throughout November and December, the pop-up market will feature a fresh set of merchants and items. Blue Dome 202 S Elgin Ave Tulsa, OK 74120 Phone: 918-645-5349

Nov 15, 2019 - Jan 05, 2020 Rose District Ice Rink - Skate under the festive twinkle lights at Broken Arrow's only outdoor skating rink. Bring your ice skates or rent them directly on-site and glide across the ice under the pavilion at the Rose District Plaza. The Rose District Ice Rink invites everyone out to create new holiday memories at this fun attraction, which opens before Thanksgiving and runs through the New Year. Group rates, private ice and birthday party packages available. 418 S Main St Broken Arrow, OK 74012

Nov 23, 2019 to Jan 05, 2020 Winterfest - Downtown Tulsa is transformed into a festive wonderland during Winterfest, an annual holiday tradition. Bring friends and family together for holiday festivities and share the joyful spirit of the season. Experience the thrill of outdoor ice skating, see Oklahoma's tallest outdoor Christmas tree, take a ride in a horse-drawn carriage, listen to live entertainment and browse beautiful holiday light displays. Downtown Tulsa, OK 74103 Phone: 918-894-4268

Nov 20, 2019 to Dec 30, 2019 Fantasy Land of Lights - Bring the family out for this drive-through Christmas light show at Johnstone Park. Enjoy the music, synchronized lighted tunnel, animated displays and thousands of lights decorating the park each night the display is open. You'll be dazzled by the different colors and shapes of the displays coming together for a park full of Christmas cheer. Johnstone Park Bartlesville, OK 74003 Phone: 918-914-1530

Nov 27, 2019 - Jan 01, 2020 Rhema Christmas Lights - Join over 200,000 annual visitors at the Rhema Christmas Lights display and witness over two million shimmering lights synchronized to Christmas music. This much-loved lights display in Broken Arrow began in 1982 and has been attracting thousands of visitors ever since. Visitors to the Rhema Christmas Lights event can drive through the lights in their own vehicle, get out of

the car and walk around the park, or view the spectacular displays from a carriage. Horse-drawn carriage rides will be available on select evenings. Rhema Bible Church 1025 W Kenosha St Broken Arrow, OK 74012 Phone: 918-289-1607, 918-258-1588

Nov 28, 2019 - Dec 30, 2019 Twin Bridges Park of Lights - Dress warmly for the brisk winter chill and bring the family out for a drive through this annual Christmas lights display, set up in beautiful Twin Bridges Park near Fairland. Twin Bridges Park of Lights features a dazzling collection of over 40 brightly lit holiday displays in Grand Lake State Park. One of the largest displays of twinkling Christmas lights in the area, Twin Bridges Park of Lights transports holiday visitors to an evening wonderland filled with themed displays. Twin Bridges State Park 14801 S Hwy 137 Fairland, OK 74343 Phone: 918-542-6969

Nov 28, 2019 - Jan 01, 2020 Winter Wonderland Christmas Light Tour - Celebrate the beauty of winter at Pine Lodge Resort in Ketchum. Enjoy a spectacular old-fashioned Christmas light display featuring over 500,000 lights Winter Wonderland Christmas Light Tour. Step into a festive world of illuminated log cabins, antique cars and woodland animals all aglow. Get into the Christmas spirit along the shores of Grand Lake as you drive through the twinkling grounds. Admission is free and visitors can drive through the grounds as many times as they like from Thanksgiving night to New Year's Day. Pine Lodge Resort Ketchum, OK 74349 Phone: 918-782-1400, 918-782-7062 Toll Free: 800-640-3173 Fax: 918-782-3493

Nov 28, 2019 - Jan 01, 2020 Garden of Lights - Experience animated displays and over 1.2 million shimmering lights at Muskogee's annual Garden of Lights. Drive through Honor Heights Park and view 130 acres of trees, bushes and water areas decorated for the holiday season. Visit Garden of Lights and experience the natural beauty of the park filled with twinkling streams of light. View rose and azalea bushes illuminated with color, imitating their natural state during the blooming of spring. Drive 35-40 minutes through the park to watch animated displays synchronized to Christmas music. This Christmas light display will also feature lighted displays of deer, squirrels and birds scattered amongst a wide variety of trees wrapped in lights. Honor Heights Park 1400 Honor Heights Dr Muskogee, OK 74401 Phone: 918-684-6302

Do You have an event that you would like to share ?

Community Links of Chelsea

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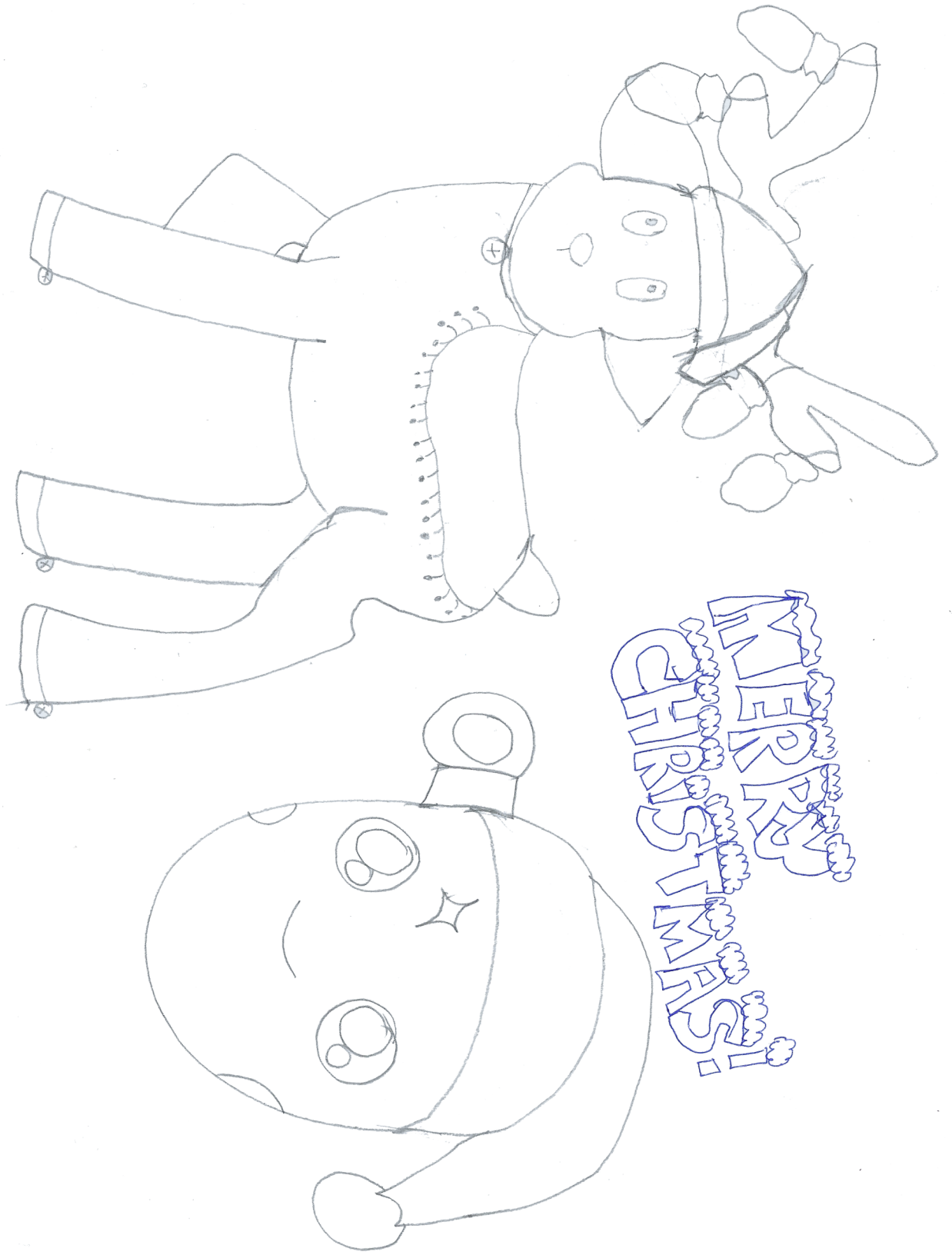
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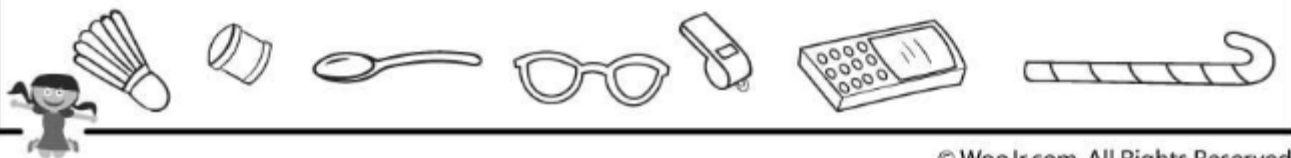
Ph: 918-789-2862

Fax: 918-789-5296

Email: links@links.community-options.net

DATA MASTERS: Steven Burdick and Eric Peachey





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Getting to know the Lutherans

A Savior

Among the many common phrases, greetings and song lyrics of the Christmas season, there is one statement that was heard by the shepherds that brings joy to every ear this season, “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” We celebrate this Dec 25th the Savior...

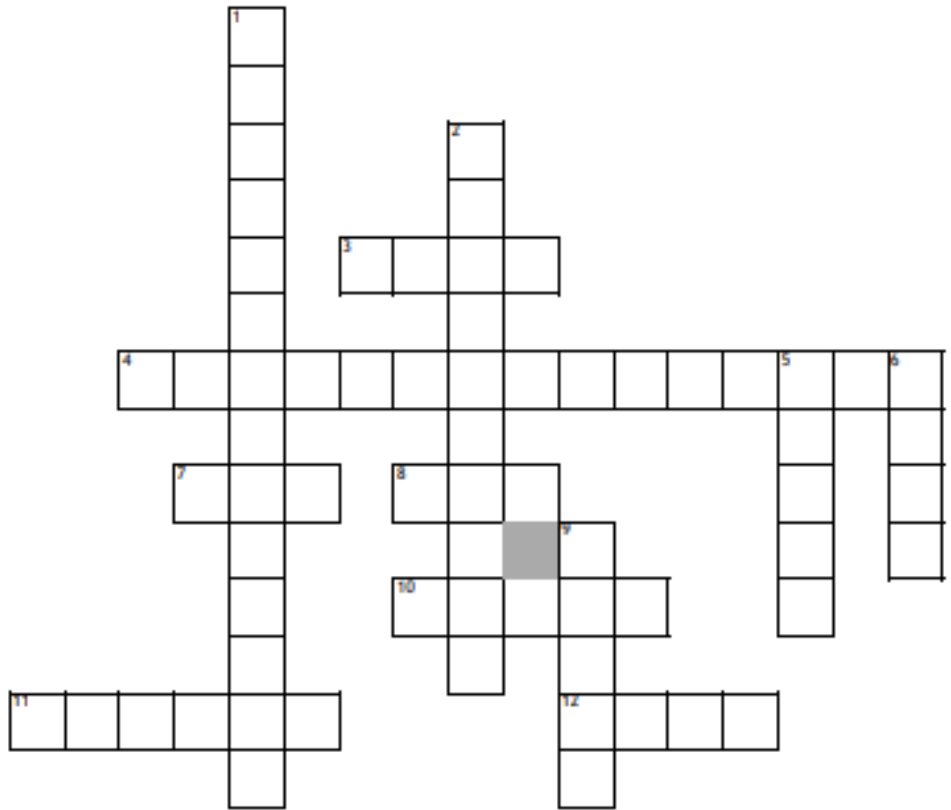
- ...Not Santa Clause to bring the newest gadgets,
- ...Not a life coach to help you through the difficulties of life,
- ...Not a fairy godmother to make your dreams come true,
- ...Not an advice columnist to answer your complicated questions,
- ...Not a role model,
- ...Not a teacher of philosophy,
- ...The Savior!

Jesus was born in the little town of Bethlehem to the Virgin Mary so that He could live His life in your place, die for your sins, and defeat death and the grave on Easter morning. Jesus did what you couldn't and did what you would have never imagined. See how much God loves you that He granted an eternal gift - eternal life. Not a gift that gets old, broke, obsolete or stolen. Not a gift you can imagine with your imperfect mind. In Christ, Christmas continues to give forever and ever. Blessed Christmas!

DATA MASTER: Heather Conn

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Messiah Lutheran Church 460 N. Wilson, Vinita, OK. Sunday School and Bible Class 9:00 a.m. Worship 10:00 a.m. 918-256-3223 Email: messiahvinita@aol.com</p> | <p>St. Paul Lutheran Church Washington and Pine, Fairland, OK. Sunday School and Bible Class 9:15 a.m. Worship 10:30 a.m. 918-676-3059 Email: stpaulluthch@aol.com</p> |
| <p>Bethlehem Lutheran Church 6911 West 380 Road, Adair, OK 74330 Worship 9:00 a.m. 918-785-2994 Sunday School and Bible Class 10:15 a.m.</p> | <p>Immanuel Lutheran Church 706 Rockwood Drive, Grove, OK. Worship 9:30 a.m. 918-786-4585 Website: www.lutheransonline.com/lo/Groveok</p> |
| <p>Mt. Olive Lutheran Church 2337 North Main, Miami, OK 74354 Worship 2:00 p.m. (918) 542-4681 Sunday School and Bible Class 3:00 p.m. Email: mtolive@cablone.net</p> | <p>Redeemer Lutheran Church 220 N. Seminole, Claremore, OK. Sunday School and Bible Class 9:00 a.m. Worship 10:30 a.m. 918-341-1429 Email: rluther@sbcglobal.net – Website www.rlccok.org</p> |
| <p><i>Guests are always welcome.</i> <i>See you Sunday at worship.</i></p> | <p>St. John Lutheran Church 607 SE 9th Street, Pryor, OK. Sunday School and Bible Class 9:15 a.m. Worship 10:30 a.m. 918-825-1926 Email: stjohncpyor@sbcglobal.net - Website: www: stjohncpyor.org</p> |

Crossword Puzzle



Across

3. Reindeer team, counting Rudolph
4. Reindeer
7. "Reindeer Games" star Affleck
8. Reindeer feeder?
10. one of santa's reindeer
11. Reindeer feature
12. Reindeer kin

Down

1. Mythical beast guiding flying reindeer?
2. He flies behind reindeer
5. Christmas reindeer
6. Reindeer landing site
9. north pole reindeer

By: Eric Peachey and Steve Burdick

Solution is printed in page 37

Word Search Puzzle

T W D V S J B Y U E Q B O N J K Q L E N I D W H
 V W N C I T V O E Y J Y W F S C I B O L I E P Q
 I S M X L P S K D E O L R A U H U O T N Q S R R
 C P F X E J I N O Y X P F T E R Q M E G M U Z O
 C L W F N G A L D Z G R K P C I M D L L T O U C
 S H U B T Q D T C Z M E E E X S E F S F M H Z P
 T N O U N H J E H X X E E P W T R I I A P D B L
 N R U T I P I D G F Y D R P E M R R M N W A E Z
 A E T F G L M A I V B N T E T A Y E E R E E B M
 S M Y U H O Y R E N N I S R A S C P L T S R X B
 E K M M T D Y A L U Y E A M L C H L E E P B X J
 R Y Z Z U U V P S O M R M I O A R A T C H R N I
 P D W U S R F S A Q U T T N C R I C T U T E W N
 U U D D E T A A T X K O S T O D S E E A A G V G
 J H J K N P D M N N C B I X H S T N R S E N H L
 I D R O A P A T A P Z D R Q C H M C S Y R I A E
 K E D C C F Y S S V U Z H I Z M A O T R W G E B
 F F P L Y L R I C W Y D C L Y U S M O R T X K E
 N Z W Q D Z N R C P A A D J P F O P S E Q U U L
 S V R J N C T H Q P P K I I V H T J A B Y N F L
 V J Y B A R H C H V R I C A N H R P N N P D C S
 M D B N C I T S A Q L R A J O G L K T A N R R B
 S N H V S I X J X F B K T Z P B Q S A R Q J E J
 S E I K O O C D N A K L I M M B S L M C I D J C

christmas
parade

Reindeer

merry christmas

letters to santa

mistletoe

Rudolph

presants

pudding

cranberry sauce

santa sleigh

fireplace

christmas tree

wreath

jingle bells

Gingerbread house

silent night

chocolate

milk and cookies

peppermint

candycanes

christmas cards

By: Eric Peachey and Steven Burdick

Solution is on page 35

CryptoQuote Puzzles

Title: UNICEF **Quote From:** Danny Kaye

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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| | | | | | | | | | | | W | | | | | | K | | | N | | | | | |

P V Y Y W L H J X H H J Y Z U L H R K Y C X K Q P E B
 H J P E B P J X A Y Y A Y K R Q U E Y P E
 Z F W P V Y L P L H U R Y X L L U S P X H Y Q
 C P H J U N E P S Y V .

Title: Children **Quote From:** Danny Kaye

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z |
| | | W | | H | | | | | | | | | S | I | J | | | | | | | | | | |

C P D K C D L D Y D D J K V G Z M G C W Z C K Y Q D S N
 M Q D B I Q D P O J I T D Q H A K F G Z M S I C K
 B I Q D O P D M A G C H A K F N G Z M S Q C L D Q X
 B I Q D O P C O N N N O M S V I G Z D Q
 S M G A Q M K N O C C O N W I A S G Q V
 W M S Z M L D .

Title: Democracy **Quote From:** Danny Kaye

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z |
| | | | Y | | | | | C | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

V K Z M Z I C O J D Y J U S Z M I C U D Y Z D T I M J I W
 C V O Z A L .

DADDY'S GIFT



How was your Christmas? Mine was a little rough; first one since my Dad passed last August.

In early July of this year I was sharing with my Dad a catalog of pretty "snowballs" (the glass globes with figurines and snow inside). In the catalog he found one he wanted me to pick up for Mom for Christmas. So I did, and promptly forgot all about it until I was retrieving the wrapping paper from under my bed Christmas Eve.

While I am pulling the paper out I saw a bag that I did not recognize until I opened it, there was the snowball with a man and woman angel kissing inside and a guardian angel perched on top on the outside of the globe. Dad said that was Mom and him with their guardian angel.

Have you ever been in a situation where you know when you tell or give someone something it will make them sad and happy at the same time? That's the situation I was in. I knew in giving this to Mom she would feel sad and miss Dad even more, yet I also knew it would in the long run make her very happy. The gift did both.

When I got to Mom's on Christmas Eve evening, I spread the other gifts I had out around the fireplace, then sat the snowball on the coffee table. I had wrapped it just like the others but knew exactly which one it was.

Since Mom is not a curious person, she never asked anything about the gift sitting on the coffee table, after we both got settled down I said, "I don't know how to say this except to just say it. This is your Christmas present from Dad, he asked me to pick it up last July".

At first she lost all color in her face (that scared me), then she said "Should I open it now or wait until tomorrow, I suggested she open then. She opened that gift with such care and tenderness, slowly she pulled each piece of scotch tape off and finally revealed the box. The box she looked all over seeing if this was a real box

or a camouflage box.

When she finally opened it and took the snowball out of it packing, she quietly started shedding tears. The snowball also plays music; my Dad had picked out "Once upon a Dream". Mom wound the key and this pretty melody started playing, she turned the snowball upside down and back and the iridescent glitter gently fall over the figurines.

I believe my Mom sees this gift as the most precious gift my Dad ever gave her, besides his love. Since she opened it Christmas Eve she has taken it into her bedroom that they shared for 51 1/2 years and plays the music and watches the glitter. Then in the morning she brings it out to the living room where she can see it all day.

DATA MASTER: Steven Burdick



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Test Your Knowledge of Idioms and Proverbs

Idioms

1. To be on cloud nine- to be extremely happy
 - A. As happy as a dog with two tails
 - B. Overjoyed
 - C. In seventh heaven
 - D. To be extremely happy
2. To give someone some slack
 - A. Have mercy
 - B. To stop being so critical of them
 - C. To easy on
 - D. Be merciful
3. To break the ice
 - A. Converse
 - B. To debate
 - C. To have a discussion
 - D. None of the above
4. To wrap your head around something
 - A. To understand something complicated
 - B. To make sense of
 - C. To master
 - D. To apprehend
5. To bite the bullet
 - A. To do something tough as nails
 - B. To do something hard- nosed
 - C. To do something headstrong
 - D. To force yourself to do something unpleasant or Difficult

By Breanna McDowell

Solution in Page 34

**To share your story with us contact:
Zia Partovi at 918-244-0457 or 918-789-2862 or email him at
links@links.community-options.net**

Proverbs

1. Absence makes the heart grow fonder
 - A. When people we love are not with us, We love them even more
 - B. To have an attachment
 - C. To delight in
 - D. To have devotion for
2. Your guess is as good as mine
 - A. Lacking
 - B. I'm unsure of the answer or solution to a problem
 - C. Skeptical
 - D. None of the above
3. You can catch more flies with honey than you can with vinegar
 - A. You can get what you want by being nice
 - B. You can get what you want by being friendly
 - C. You can get what you want by being polite
 - D. You can get what you want by being bad
4. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link
 - A. To feel frail
 - B. To feel sluggish
 - C. One weak part will render the whole weak
 - D. None of the above
5. Adversity and loss make a man wise
 - A. To gain good judgement
 - B. To gain understanding
 - C. Enlightenment
 - D. We gain wisdom faster in difficult times than in prosperous times

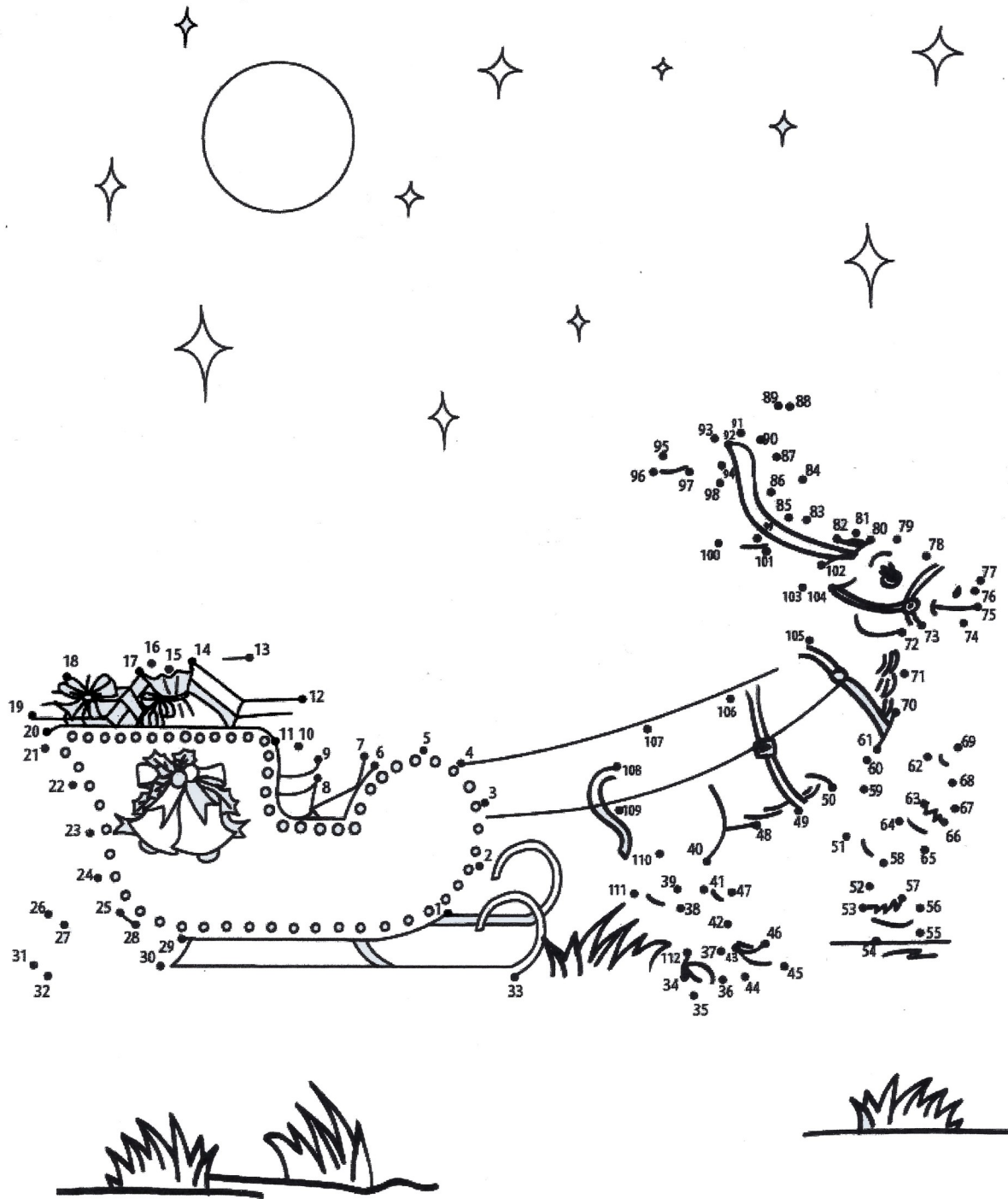


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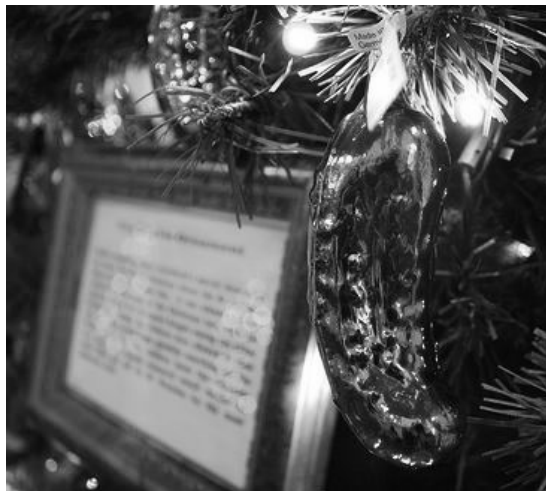
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Dot Picture Puzzle

Connect the dots to reveal the picture.



The Christmas Pickle



The tradition of the Christmas Pickle has got to be one of the strangest modern Christmas customs, in that no one is quite sure why it exists at all!

In the 1880s Woolworth stores started selling glass ornaments imported from Germany and some were in the shape of various fruit and vegetables. It seems that pickles must have been among the selection!

Around the same time it was claimed that the Christmas Pickle was a very old German tradition and that the pickle was the last ornament hung on the Christmas tree and then the first child to find the pickle got an extra present.

However, the claim that it's an old German tradition seems to be a total myth! Not many people in Germany have even heard of the Christmas Pickle! (Similarly in Russia virtually no one knows the supposedly Russian story of Babushka!)

Some families now have the tradition of hanging the pickle on the tree, with the first person/child to find it getting a present. But it probably didn't start in Germany!

There are two other rather far-fetched stories linking the pickle to Christmas.

One features a fighter in the American Civil War who was born in Bavaria (an area of what is now Germany). He was a prisoner, and starving, he begged a guard for one last pickle before he died. The guard took pity on him and gave a pickle to him. The pickle gave him the mental and physical strength to live on!

The other story is linked to St. Nicholas. It's a medieval tale of two Spanish boys traveling home from a board-

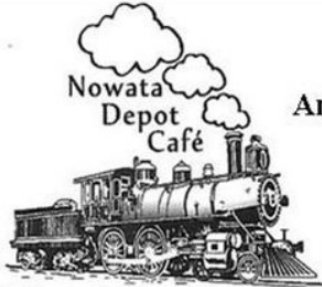
ing school for the holidays. When they stopped at an inn for the night, the evil innkeeper, killed the boys and put them in a pickle barrel. That evening, St. Nicholas stopped at the same inn, and found the boys in the barrel and miraculously bought them back to life!

There is an old legend about St. Nicholas rescuing boys from a barrel but the barrel was originally holding meat for pies - not pickles!

So it's most likely that an ornament salesman, with a lot of spare pickles to sell, invented the legend of the Christmas Pickle!

The American city of Berrien Springs, MI (also known as the Christmas Pickle Capital of the World) has an annual pickle festival held during the early part of December.

DATA MASTER: Doug WM Stone



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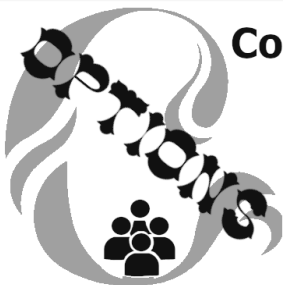
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CryptoQuote Puzzles Solution

Title: UNICEF **Quote From:** Danny Kaye

I feel that the most rewarding thing I have ever done in my life is to be associated with UNICEF.

Title: Children **Quote From:** Danny Kaye

I believe deeply that children are more powerful than oil, more beautiful than rivers, more precious than any other natural resource a country can have.

Title: Democracy **Quote From:** Danny Kaye

There is a danger in democracy itself.

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Answers of Idioms and Proverbs

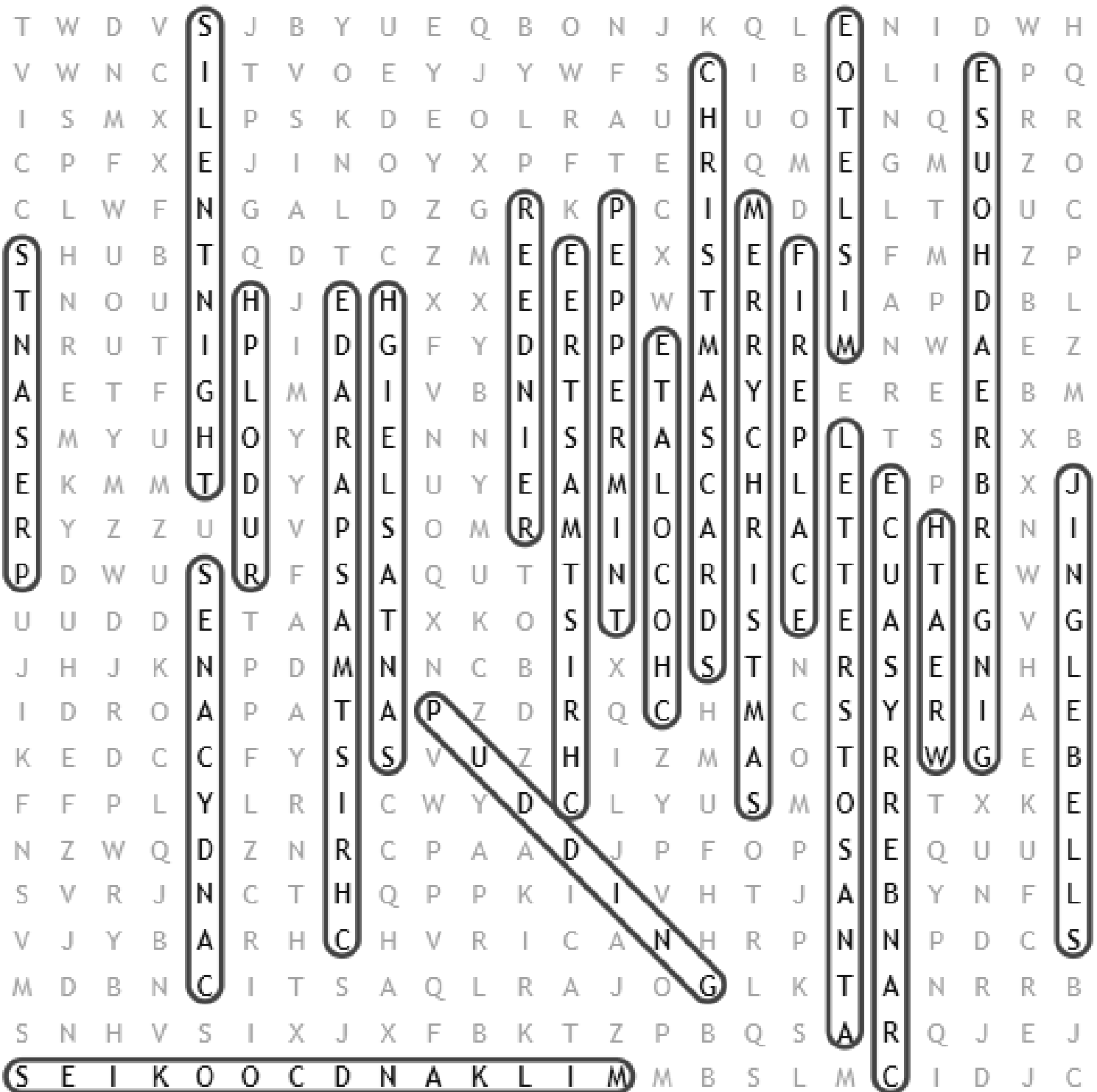
Idioms

1. D
2. B
3. D
4. A
5. D

Proverbs

1. A
2. B
3. A
4. C
5. C

Word Search Puzzle Solution



By: Eric Peachey, and Steven Burdick

christmas parade
 letters to santa
 presents
 santa sleigh
 wreath
 silent night
 peppermint

Reindeer
 misletoe
 pudding
 fireplace
 jingle bells
 chocolate
 candycanes

merry christmas
 Rudolph
 cranberry sauce
 christmas tree
 Gingerbread house
 milk and cookies
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Sudoku Puzzle Easy Solution

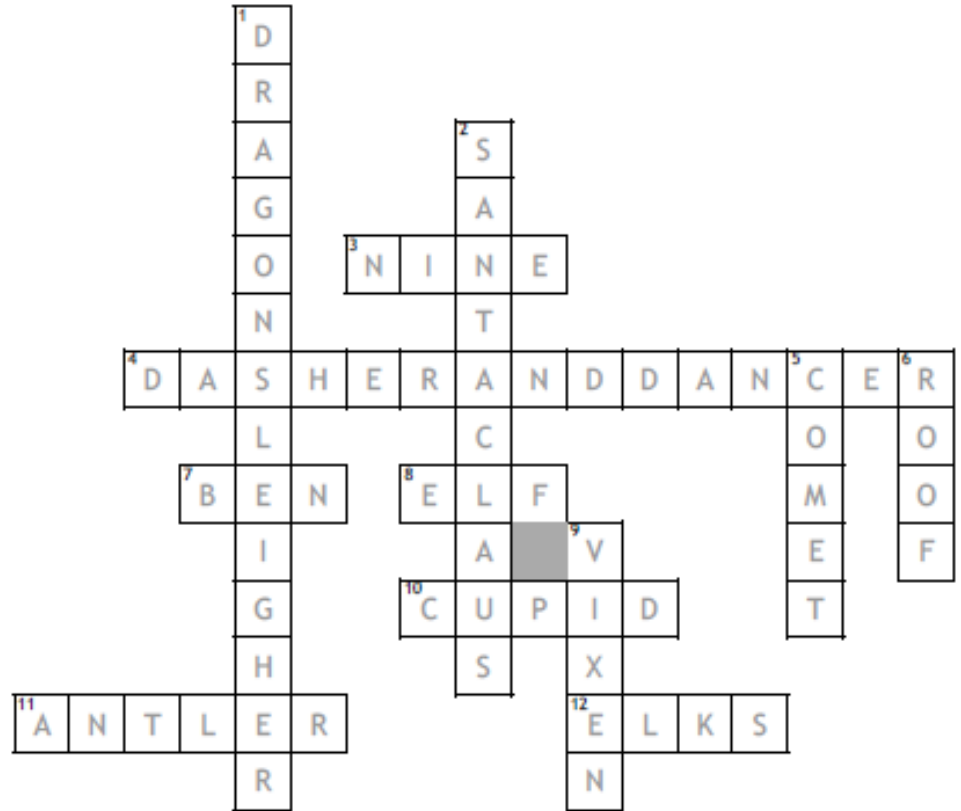
| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 9 | 4 |
| 1 | 9 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 6 |
| 4 | 8 | 2 | 6 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 5 | 3 |
| 2 | 5 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 8 |
| 6 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 8 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 9 |
| 7 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 2 |
| 8 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 9 | 2 | 7 |
| 9 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 8 | 6 | 5 |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 2 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 1 |

Sudoku Puzzle Moderate Solution

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 2 | 8 | 9 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 4 |
| 4 | 1 | 9 | 6 | 2 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 3 |
| 6 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 2 |
| 1 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 6 | 9 | 3 | 2 | 7 |
| 3 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 9 | 8 |
| 9 | 8 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 6 |
| 8 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 9 |
| 5 | 9 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 1 |
| 2 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 9 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 5 |

BY: Nikki Hamilton

Crossword Puzzle Solution



Across

- 3. Reindeer team, counting Rudolph
- 4. Reindeer
- 7. "Reindeer Games" star Affleck
- 8. Reindeer feeder?
- 10. one of santa's reindeer
- 11. Reindeer feature
- 12. Reindeer kin

Down

- 1. Mythical beast guiding flying reindeer?
- 2. He flies behind reindeer
- 5. Christmas reindeer
- 6. Reindeer landing site
- 9. north pole reindeer

BY Eric Peachey and Steven Burdick

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Jiffy Mart
Lakeside State Bank
Little Green Shop
Main Street Diner

Chouteau

Cherry's Chouteau Mall
Chouteau Public Library &
Senior Citizens Center
Dutch Pantry
Marvin's Grocery
Pizza Corral

Claremore

Bill's Sporting Goods
Brook Field Nursing Home
Casey's
Claremore DHS
Claremore Nursing Home
Claremore Senior Citizen's
Claremore Veteran's Center
Classy Cuts and Wigs
Kum N Go (W Will Rogers)
Kum N Go E Hwy 20
Midco Clothes & More
Stillwater Milling
Emerald Care Center

Commerce

Eastwood Manor
Lil' Cafe

Fairland

Fairland Sr. Citizen's

Grove

Eagles Landing
Drakes
Grand Prosthetics & Artificial
Limbs
Grandwood
Mr. M's Convenience Store
Grove Sr. Citizens
Harps Grocery
Tom Cat Corner

Jay

Sinclair Station
Delaware County Library
Jay Senior Citizen's

Ketchum

Buddy's Foods
Woodshed

Langley

4 State Insurance
Langley Drug
Reasor's Grocery Store
Langley Western Store

Miami

Marvin's Grocery
Windridge
Wal-Mart Supercenter
Mt. Olive Lutheran Church

Nowata

D&L's
Homeland
Nowata Depot Café
Nowata Senior Citizens Cen-
ter
Ranch Supply
Reid's Discount

Oologah

Pump - N - Petes #15
Tacora Mart (Conoco)

Pryor

Innovations in Hair
Mayes Co. Nutritional Center
Wilkerson Real Estate
Pryor Library
Shady Rest Nursing Home
Paulie's Donuts
The Book Exchange

Spavinaw

T-General Store

Vinita

Burrough Manor
Carter's IGA
Grand Lake Mental Health
Heartsworth House
Midco Clothes & More
Sam's Tire
Veterans Clinic
Vinita Sr. Center
Vinita DHS
Vinita Post Office
Wood Shed
Young's Tire

Welch

Welch State Bank

Winganon

Winganon Bait Shop



Community Options, Inc.
website is operational

Pay a visit to our website to learn about what we are doing and how you can help others by getting involved.

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our website can be accessed at:
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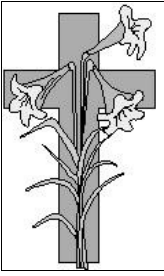
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Contents of this newspaper is compiled from available original sources. The sources URL addresses are provided for readers' further reading, if so desired.



JEWELS FROM THE WORD

THE BACKSIDE OF MY LIFE I only have one section of a cross-stitch project left to do that I started about 15 years ago, a 2-inch square window. The design is a country scene: a black iron pot-belly stove with a blue coffee pot, a wooden chair with a gray cat sleeping in it, braided rug, and basket of apples, with a pretty curtained window behind.

The backside is a faded image of the pattern. The details can't be seen, such as the face of the gray cat, only a gray blob. This present life is like the backside of the cross-stitch picture—only a faded image of the real life. The life we are living today is "cross-stitching" our eternal home. Every day you live makes another stitch in the pattern of your life.

Bright yellow is stitched by the happy occasions of your life. The blues are from the tranquil days. The golds and silvers are not how much money you have, but from the treasures of family and good friends. The browns and blacks from the hard days of life—financial set-backs, marital problems, family misunderstandings, health problems. Red stitches are true love, pink and blue for the precious children of your life. Or-

Lavon Hightower Lewis To read more devotions, go to:
<http://jewelsfromtheword.com/> Email me at llewis2138@sbcglobal.net

anges for the beautiful sunsets, white for the snow-falls, gray for your senior years.

This present life is not the real life. It is a temporary training session, a preparation place for the life to come. Paul reminded us that the things we see are not the eternal things, because they are temporary and will pass away some day.

“While we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” II Corinthians 4:18 NKJV

This life is passing away, day by day. One day your life on earth will be finished.

When you cross over to your permanent, eternal home, what will your life look like then?

DATA MASTER: Heather Conn

**To share your story with us contact:
Zia Partovi at 918-244-0457 or 918-789-2862 or
email him at links@links.community-options.net**



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