

# CAROLER CHRONICLE

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## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CHRISTMAS LOFT

The response to our Photo Contest was terrific. We received loads of entries and we were thrilled with how beautifully and imaginatively store owners display our products. The CAROLERS are on mantels and in fireplaces, on trees and in wreaths, on tables and in niches, on stairs and in corners. They are on shelves: glass shelves, pine shelves, cherry shelves, painted shelves, plain shelves. They are arranged on dressers, in cupboards, on hutches, and in cabinets. The beautiful old furniture used as backgrounds for the CAROLERS was a delightful surprise to us. We received some pictures with real live people dressed like the CAROLERS amidst the CAROLERS. Needless to say, choosing winners from all these wonderful entries was hard to do.

Third place winner is Holiday Happiness in Davenport, Iowa. Owner Lois Britt displays the CAROLERS just inside the front door to her little shop. Visitors are greeted by the CAROLERS who stand on long glass shelves and in a hutch. They are visible from the street and make a very cheery sight, inviting passersby to come in.

Lucy's Flower and Gift Shop in Nashville, Georgia, captured second place. In a splendid armoire amongst Christmas greens and berries and pine cones, hunting horns, lampposts, and baskets of Byers' Choice Christmas cards, stand the CAROLERS. A Byers' Choice display card sits prominently on an eye-level shelf. Lucy Akins, the owner, opens the doors of the armoire for guests and it can be Christmas in July. By September the doors are kept open and the CAROLERS are grouped throughout the shop.

And the first place winner of a trip to Byers' Choice Ltd. is The Christmas Loft in Jay, Vermont, owned by Richard and Ronnie Vander Veer.

A great big knotty pine display cupboard stands in a corner and is filled at all levels with Byers' Choice CAROLERS, all the year round.

The outside of the cupboard is trimmed with Christmas greens and a large lighted wreath with two CAROLERS in the center. Inside is a pyramid of dozens of the CAROLERS. Floating on a cloud against a blue sky are the angels from The Christmas Pageant series. The characters from Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* have a high shelf of their own. The whole thing is very Christmasy and just makes you want to take home a few of the CAROLERS.

Congratulations to Richard and Ronnie Vander Veer for their inspiring presentation of the CAROLERS. Everyone at Byers' Choice Ltd. will be looking forward to seeing them in the spring.

## A MESSAGE FROM BOB BYERS



We have been fortunate to experience a growing demand for Byers' Choice figures. In trying to meet this demand without sacrificing the product's quality, our company has experienced both successes and shortcomings. I would like to take a moment to address each of these areas.

Unfortunately, our growth has not always allowed us to provide the personal service which we would like to give you. We have recently hired Lisa Porter specifically to deal with customer problems. Call Lisa at (215) 822-6700 whenever a question arises. If she is unable to give you a satisfactory response, please ask for me, and I'll try to take care of it. We have made some mistakes for which we apologize.

This Spring, to our surprise, Byers' Choice Ltd. was recognized by the Central Bucks Chamber of Commerce for their Outstanding Business Achievement Award. Previous recipients of their awards have included the W. Atlee Burpee Co., Fisher & Porter, James Michener, and Pearl Buck. We believe this honor must be shared not only by Joyce, me and our employees, but also the wonderful shop owners who have promoted our product. Our thanks goes out to all of you for giving us the opportunity to share our good fortune with others.

Finally, we would like to thank everyone who helped us last fall in our fight against copyright infringements. We are currently in litigation with Brinn's China & Glass and hope that a settlement can be reached within a few months. This and other actions against companies who are producing imitations of Byers' Choice CAROLER® figurines is only possible with your help. We feel it's very important to protect the collectibility of the CAROLER figures, and any information which you can give to us regarding competitive products that either you or your customers feel have evolved out of our line or look confusingly similar is greatly appreciated.

In closing, our company has seen tremendous growth over the few short years since our inception. This year we are trying earnestly to produce a better product and to deliver it to you punctually. Even with the best of intentions, there will be snags, so please let us know about them so that they can be addressed promptly. Thank you very much for your interest and support.

Sincerely,  
Bob Byers



Spirit of Christmas Present



St. Nicholas and Knecht Ruprecht



Children with Skates



Victorian Grandparents

This year our new characters, which hopefully you have seen at one of the winter shows, include: The Spirit of Christmas Present wearing a green velveteen robe trimmed in brown fur and carrying a wine goblet and a fruit-filled cornucopia; Saint Nicholas dressed in a red velveteen cape carries a wooden shoe filled with holly; Knecht Ruprecht brings with him coal and switches for naughty boys and girls; Children with Skates are dressed in many colors and plaids so that they will match existing Byers' Choice caroling families; Victorian Grandparents also come in a vast assort-

ment so that they will co-ordinate with existing Victorian collections; Shepherds are second on stage in our Christmas pageant; and singing cats are ready to begin harmonizing with the family dog. All are selling very well.

We will add several new characters to the line in June, so be sure to visit the Byers' Choice display at one of the summer shows. Among the new items will be the 1989 Mother's Day special piece. There will also be several special figures for release this fall.



## THE STORY OF ST. NICHOLAS

The legend of St. Nicholas begins in the 3rd Century. While on a ship in the Mediterranean, he prayed to God to calm a fierce storm. His prayers were answered, and after the boat sailed into Myra (in what is now Turkey), Nicholas went to the church to give thanks. Meanwhile, the church elders were trying to elect a new bishop, and they received a vision to select the first man named Nicholas who came into the church to pray after a certain hour. Much to his surprise, Nicholas was immediately elected Bishop of Myra.

St. Nicholas is known for his kindness and good deeds. One of the most notable occurred in a small village. Three girls could not get married as their father could not afford a dowry. The girls secretly drew lots, in agreement that one ~~would be sold into slavery~~ to save the other two. Hearing of their plight, Nicholas threw a bag of gold through each girl's window to save them from slavery.

St. Nicholas' Eve, December 5th, is celebrated in many different ways throughout the world. Perhaps one of the most well-known celebrations is in Holland, where Dutch children leave their shoes by the fire in anticipation of a visit from St. Nicholas. The good saint travels from house to house on his large, white horse with Knecht Ruprecht, his elvish companion. Knecht would slide down the chimney of a home to unlock the door for St. Nick. A decision would then be made on how the child behaved over the past year. If the child had been good and learned his Catechisms, he would receive gifts; however, if the child had not behaved, St. Nicholas would order Knecht Ruprecht to leave behind coal and a switch.

Thus, the legend of St. Nicholas lives on, and he continues to serve his original mission: to prepare children's hearts for the celebration of the birth of Christ.



## COLLECTOR'S CLUB

In the belief that there has been a need for some time, we are starting a club for collectors. Before long the CAROLER figurines you receive will have a seal on the bottom that the customer may remove and mail to us to join The Byers' Choice Collector's Club.

As in so many other of our ventures, we need your help. How can this club be helpful to you? How can it be helpful to your customers, the collectors? What makes a successful collector's club? Please drop us a line to let us know what we should do to make this endeavor worthwhile.

Club members will receive all editions of THE COLLECTOR'S CHRONICLE, where they will be able to place ads and contact each other directly in their pursuit of elusive items.

## PATCHWORK AND INTERIORS

"The CAROLERS make you happy. You just have to smile when you see them. They remind you of when you grew up, all those Christmas memories. And once you have one, you just have to have one more." Those are Sally Lorbach's thoughts about the CAROLER figurines and what makes them so popular. Sally is the busy owner of Patchwork and Interiors in Greenville, South Carolina. During October, November, and December she also opens a big Christmas shop near the main store.

On the very day that she was opening two brand new gift shops at the Hilton Hotel in Greenville, Sally most graciously took some of her precious time to tell us about her stores and their slightly out-of-the-ordinary niche in the gift business.

Sally sells a big number of the CAROLER figurines as corporate gifts. Businesses buy the CAROLERS as gifts for valued customers and employees. They use them as gifts at conventions. The CAROLERS make lovely centerpieces at company dinners and at the end of the evening the guests can take them home.

The CAROLERS make excellent corporate gifts because, as Sally says, they make people happy. What better way to advertise than by making people happy.

With her two new gift shops at the Hilton, Sally can serve business travellers, who often need gifts for their customers or family, and can buy those gifts right in the hotel.

Sally has built two very special display fixtures to show off the CAROLERS. One is a grand multi-story house front with a doorway, windows, and ledges. With music playing inside the house, the CAROLERS stand in front, perch on window sills, and peek through the windows, caroling all the while, naturally. It makes quite a show and customers love it. The other fixture is a riser that customers can walk around and see the CAROLERS from all sides.

At the beginning of the Christmas season visitors to Sally's stores can register to win a pair of Byers' Choice CAROLERS in exchange for giving their opinions on the clothes the CAROLERS wear. People love to win prizes and Sally knows whether people prefer plaids, velvets, laces, furs, or satins.

Sally Lorbach, a most engaging Southern lady whose business manner is one of gentle zeal, has our gratitude for sharing her distinctive approach to selling many of the CAROLERS.

Just one more thing. Sally points out that the CAROLERS make perfect gifts for members of a choir.

### DID YOU KNOW?

In most cases we make only 100 of each CAROLER figure in our regular and Victorian families?



## MEET SANDY BROWN



To collectors of the CAROLERS, each CAROLER figurine is an individual. The set of the jaw, the lift of an eyebrow, the flourish of a moustache give each face its own character. It is skill that makes that so—the skill of the sculptor and the skill of the painter.

For the past several years Sandy Brown has been a feature painter, one who paints faces on the CAROLERS, a job that she says is just what she wants to do.

Sandy says that she has always been interested in art; others describe her as “very artistic—enormously creative.”

Sandy tells us her thoughts about her job in an interview.

**Q:** Sandy, what do you like best about working here?

**A:** What I like best is the management. Joyce and Bob are so fair. They really care about the employees. It is such a nice place to work because of that. New employees say so, too. Joyce and Bob do such nice things for us, like the Halloween party. Everyone carved a jack-o-lantern; some

were amazing. And everyone wore costumes, most of which were homemade. It was fantastic. We took lots of pictures and everyone had lots of fun. We all needed a break like that at that time of year.

**Q:** What a nice compliment to your employers. What do you like about doing the job itself, painting the faces of the CAROLERS?

**A:** This job is just what I want to do. I’ve always loved art and doing creative things but I never wanted to be an “artist.” You know, the person who does paintings and starves. Here I get paid to do a fun job.

**Q:** You don’t get bored?

**A:** Not at all. I did worry about that at first, but I have worked in lots of different departments here, so I know how the CAROLERS are made and shipped. Also I train new feature painters and help other feature painters who want help with problems. There is a lot of variety in the job, and I do like that. I also like details. The little things catch my eye and hold my attention. So, I guess that helps to keep me interested.

When Byers’ Choice decided to add caroling dogs to its product line, they held a contest among the employees for the best dog design. Sandy’s creativity and attention to fine detail is evident in her winning entry. Her pooch, the one with the long ears, the eloquently lifted paw, and the sincere face is complete down to the individual strands on his coat.



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