



Caroler Chronicle®

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Man and Woman with Greens

It is unknown when we first started decorating our homes with greens for winter holidays; however, it is certain that this custom pre-dates Christianity. In a famous letter, Pope Gregory advises Augustine of Canterbury to allow pagan customs capable of Christian interpretation to remain.

Holly, ivy, mistletoe and all varieties of evergreens were brought into the homes of Victorian families at Christmastime. For those who lived in a city and could not gather their own greens, holly and evergreens were sold from carts that vendors pulled through the streets. "Cries" carried baskets of mistletoe and ivy on their backs and arms. The greens were fashioned into balls, wreaths, garlands and swags that were used to decorate every room.

The first Christmas tree to appear in England in 1841 is credited to Prince Albert who brought this custom from his German homeland. It quickly caught on and soon became a part of every family's celebration. The customs of evergreens and trees actually arrived in America before it arrived in England thanks to our early Dutch and German settlers.





Holiday Greetings

The first Christmas card was posted in 1843. Sir Henry Cole commissioned John Calott Horsley to design for him a card which he could send to his family and friends to eliminate the need of writing traditional seasonal letters to each of them. The novelty caught on, and by the 1880s, millions of cards were sold.

As they are today, Christmas cards were available in a vast array of designs so that the sender could choose a card which reflected his sentiments. Popular artists such as Kate Greenaway designed cards with lovely renderings of charming young ladies. Pictures ranged from beautiful drawings that reflected the aesthetic movement of the time to humorous cartoons which sometimes became insulting or macabre, as in one extreme example of a husband murdering his wife. The Victorians certainly had a strange sense of humor. Perhaps this card illustrated the day the Christmas bills arrived.

25th Anniversary Party at Byers' Choice Ltd.

On June 6th – 8th 2003, Byers' Choice will be hosting a special weekend in celebration of our 25th Anniversary. Our first open house was held in the Spring of 2001. More than 5,000 visitors came from forty plus states to Byers' Choice in Chalfont, PA to partake in a special behind the scenes tour of the Caroler® factory. The weekend was a great opportunity for Caroler fans and our creative artisans to meet and discuss what makes the Carolers so unique. We have already begun plans to make next year's gathering even more special than the first, so mark your calendar. It is certain to be a fun weekend, and we hope that you will be able to join us. Look for more information about this event in your next Caroler Chronicle®





Winterthur Museum and Gardens – an American Country Estate

Located in nearby Delaware, *Winterthur* is the former home of Henry Francis du Pont (1880-1969), an avid antiques collector, horticulturist and gentleman farmer. In the early 20th century, H. F. du Pont and his father, Henry Algernon du Pont, designed *Winterthur*, the family estate, in the spirit of 18th- and 19th-century European country houses.

Today, the museum is home to more than 85,000 American antiques displayed in magnificent period rooms. *Winterthur* is also well known for its 60-acre naturalistic garden, its design is carefully orchestrated to show color from January through November. Waterways, rolling meadows and stone bridges wonderfully accent the grounds. A visitor can also view reconstructed workshops to learn how furniture and clocks were made by early American craftsmen. *The Enchanted Woods™* and *Touch-It Room* offer fun ways for children to play and learn.



*Yuletide at Winterthur:
Decorating for the Holidays*
is on view from November
9th to January 5th. This
exhibit pairs recreations
of early American holiday
traditions with rooms

decorated in a more modern fashion to show how Yuletide practices have evolved over the years. Visitors can see how presents were wrapped and distributed in earlier times. More than twelve table-top trees, with decorations ranging from cut paper to lace, are also on display. (Fee charged).

Byers' Choice has partnered with the non-profit *Winterthur* to create special figures to help share the history and beauty of America's past. Proceeds support the maintenance and development of *Winterthur*, an American Country Estate, and the furtherance of its educational programs. *Winterthur* is open seven days a week, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. except for Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. *For more information, please call 800-448-3883 or visit www.winterthur.org.*



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Christmas Cookies



Baking Christmas cookies is something the Byers family has taken seriously for many generations. Not only favorite recipes, but also cookie cutters, springerle rolling pins, rosette irons and cookie presses have been handed down from one generation to the next.

Baking would begin weeks before Christmas. Mothers and daughters would bake their favorites and then trade or share with one another. Now, all could treat their holiday guests to beautiful trays containing a dazzling array of yummy treats. Walnut Kisses were made with nuts gathered from under the tree next to the barn. Dad helped shell them by clamping them in his vise. Lace cookies so thin you could see through them. Peppermints, Jelly Gems and paper-thin Sand Tarts sat next to Sugar cookies cut in many shapes and decorated with colored sugars and icing. Ginger cookies and cookies with raisins competed with old standbys such as oatmeal, peanut butter, chocolate chip, snickerdoodles and brownies. Decisions, decisions . . . the word *calorie* was never mentioned.

Our *Boy* and *Girl Baking* are busy in the kitchen making their favorite cookies for Santa to enjoy on Christmas Eve!



Lace Cookies

Ingredients:

- 1 cup all-purpose flour, sifted
- 1 cup flaked coconut, chopped
- 1/2 cup light Karo® corn syrup
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup margarine
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Directions:

Mix flour and coconut in a separate bowl. Combine Karo syrup, brown sugar and margarine in a heavy pan. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and gradually blend in flour mixture, then vanilla. Drop on foil-covered cookie sheet by small teaspoonfuls, 3 inches apart. Bake at 350°F for 8-10 minutes. Cool on wire rack until foil can be peeled off. Yields about 4 dozen.



Snowplow – Kindle Creations™

Hitting the Slopes . . .

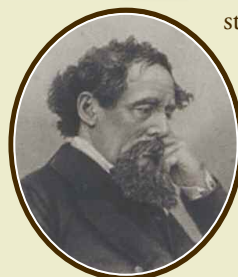
Our *Boy and Girl with Skis*, new for 2002, are joining their parents for an afternoon of wintery fun at the lodge — knit hats and scarves are sure to keep them warm from the cold!

Dickens Comes to Occoquan, VA

Christmas is a time filled with traditions, one of which is the reading of *A Christmas Carol*, a favorite among many families. But the Golden Goose, a retailer who has been carrying the Carolers® for more than twenty years, has taken this Christmas affair to a new level. Each year, they invite Gerald Charles Dickens, the great-great-grandson of the author, to come to Occoquan, VA for a special reading of the holiday classic for their customers.

Mr. Dickens bases his performance on the abbreviated stage version that Charles Dickens performed when he first came to America in 1842. He adopts different

voices, expressions and mannerisms to portray each of the story's twenty-six characters, and tries to involve the audience in each performance.



*Charles Dickens
1812-1870*

“He is just wonderful!” says Golden Goose owner, Laverne Carson, who is bringing Gerald Dickens back for the sixth time on November 24, 2002. “We have people who will come back every year. They enjoy the performance so much, and he is just a wonderful person to talk to.”

For more information about the Golden Goose and its upcoming events, call 703-494-4964 or visit www.goldgoose.com.

*Expect the first to-morrow,
when the bell tolls One . . .*

Those of you who are familiar with Charles Dickens' well-loved story, *A Christmas Carol*, will remember the Ghost of Spirit Past, the first of the three spirits to visit Ebenezer Scrooge, as arriving in a flash of light. Dickens describes this unearthly visitor as "strange — like a child: yet not so like a child as like an old man, viewed through some supernatural medium . . . Its hair was white as if with age; and yet the face had not a wrinkle . . . It wore a tunic of purest white; and around its waist was bound a lustrous belt . . . It held a branch of fresh green holly . . . and a dress trimmed with summer flowers . . . from the crown of its head there sprung a bright clear jet of light . . . a great extinguisher for a cap, which was held under its arm."

Byers' Choice's first interpretation of this figure was released in 1987. The following year, a slightly different version was introduced. In 2002, the Ghost of Spirit Past III has reappeared for those of you who missed his earlier appearance. If you would like to include him in your *A Christmas Carol* grouping, you must act quickly as he will disappear on Christmas Eve when Scrooge pushes the great extinguisher over him and puts out his light!



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