



Caroler Chronicle®

2003 • Edition I

www.byerschoice.com

Celebrating 25 Years of Byers' Choice

It doesn't seem possible to any of us that it has been twenty-five years since we first began selling the Caroler® figurines to a national audience. In 1978, we could not begin to guess where this adventure would lead us. Of course we have grown in many ways, but through it all, many things have remained the same. Most importantly, we still completely handcraft each figurine in the United States.

So much for looking back — we feel this anniversary is a time for looking ahead. A second generation is at the helm and enthusiasm is high. To celebrate, we are launching a new series inspired by Christmas illustrations from the 1800's.

Our first figure launching this new series is *Victoria*. Enclosed in the small frame pictured right is the original Victorian illustration that inspired her creation. She is dressed in her finest attire, but we especially liked her hat. *Victoria* has been named after Jeff's daughter, Ashlyn Victoria Byers who has the distinction of being the Byers family's only granddaughter.

We hope you will join us in this celebration by sending us pictures of illustrations that you feel will make interesting Carolers. These illustrations can be of Santas, children or adults. PLEASE NOTE: *These entries cannot be returned.* If your entry is chosen, you will receive one of the original prototypes with a special thank you letter. Please send your entry by postal mail to Byers' Choice Ltd., P.O. Box 158, Chalfont, PA 18914-0158 or by email to pictures@byerschoice.com no later than the end of June. Please include your email address or phone number so that we can contact you if you are the winner. The finalists will be listed on our website at www.byerschoice.com this summer so that everyone can vote for his or her favorite. The winning illustration that will be used as the inspiration behind our 2004 Christmas Illustrations figure will be announced at the end of July 2003.

Joyce



Cookie Vendor "Cries" in 2003

Last summer, Bob and Joyce spent several weeks traveling from Amsterdam through Germany and Austria in search of wooden cookie molds. These were used for many centuries to make Christmas cookies and other decorative festive treats. A few molds were found in antique shops but the best were discovered in museums. The last city on the trip was Prague, and on a hunch, Bob and Joyce entered a small shop on a back street that sold handcrafts. To their delight, they found beautiful hand-carved wooden cookie molds along with the sweet delicate cookies. They purchased several, crossed their fingers and had them mailed to Pennsylvania with the hope they would arrive safely.

This has led to an interesting relationship with a family from a small town in the Czech Republic. We commissioned the master wood carver to carve a wooden mold similar to those used in Medieval times depicting the birth of Christ. He spent more than 100 hours working on this intricate masterpiece. You can see it on display in the crèche museum at Byers' Choice in Chalfont.

The baker made three cookies measuring 18-inches in diameter. We had a tin box made especially for the cookies to assure their safe journey to the United States.



Joyeux Noël

Père Noël is the gift bearer in most of France. He is a tall, thin old man resembling Father Christmas more than our Santa. He wears a long hooded robe trimmed in fur and a cape lined with navy fabric covered with stars. He enters the house by way of the chimney. On Christmas Eve, children look up the chimney and see the stars sparkling in the sky. They mistake this for *Père Noël*'s cape and hop into bed with visions of toys and *bûche de Noël* dancing in their heads.

Over one arm, *Père Noël* carries a basket with a gift and *santon*. *Santons* are nativity figures that have been in Provence for centuries. We will tell more about them in a future newsletter.

Our *French Boy* and *Girl* carry the preparations for Christmas dinner. The *petite fille* holds the traditional chocolate cake decorated with meringue mushrooms to resemble a yule log or *la bûche de Noël*. The *petite garçon* carries a basket with a French hen . . . or is that a rooster?





Colonial Woman with Topiary

Several years ago, Colonial Williamsburg commissioned Byers' Choice to create a gardening lady which could be purchased by their visitors who wanted to take home a reminder of the magnificent colonial gardens in the restored area. This year they have generously agreed to allow us to share this lovely *Colonial Woman with Topiary* figure with our friends.

Topiary art was quite popular in colonial times, as people enjoyed training, cutting and trimming trees, shrubs and plants into fanciful and ornamental shapes. This figure holds a simple ivy ring, however, more ambitious works include everything from large geometric shapes to animals.

Spring Gardening Woman

By now we are ready for Spring, and this charming *Spring Gardening Woman*, with her arms filled with flowers, reminds us that it is not far away.

Perfect for Easter or Mother's Day, this figure can remain out all year. Her dress will be made in assorted patterns and colors.

The *wheelbarrow* is sold separately.





English Fox Hunt

Well-steeped in elaborate Victorian ritual, the fox hunt was a favorite of the British gentry. The style of the hunt would vary, but the Christmas hunt was always special.

Between forty and one hundred guests would assemble at about 9:30 a.m. for a breakfast perhaps best described as “a cold luncheon on a large scale.” It included hearty food such as joints of beef, pheasant, turkey, game pies, and of course, several of the tasty British cheeses. Sherry, brandies, liqueurs and ale would help warm the riders from within.

The meet assembled with the leading hunt officers and followers wearing scarlet coats and black velvet hats. The rest of the field wore more conservative riding habits. Only the most dedicated horsewoman joined the hunt.

The stirrup cup (made of porcelain, usually shaped like the head of a fox or hound) filled with a warming brandy was passed first to the master of the foxhounds and then to the huntsman before being passed to the other members of the hunt. This accomplished, the party rode to the covert. With the unleashing of 15 to 20 pairs of foxhounds trained to obey the huntsman’s voice or the sound of the horn which signaled the sight of a fox, the hunt began as the participants rode for hours over hill and dale following the hounds in pursuit of the elusive fox.

Currently, there is an ongoing debate in the British parliament as to whether restrictions should be placed on fox hunting, or whether the practice should be banned.

Kindle Kronicle™

by Kindle Creations, Inc.



George

This year we are really having fun with Kindles!™ These folks are no longer just kitchen helpers and Christmas Spirits, they are now dressing for all occasions. *Devils* and *Angels* have been added to our “Trick or Treat Gang,” while *Pilgrims* and *Native Americans* are great for Thanksgiving. *Scrooge*, *Bob Cratchit*, *Tiny Tim*, and *Mrs. Cratchit* make a wonderful Christmas grouping. *Santa*, *Mrs. Claus*, a doctor named *Scrubs* and a Colonial man named *George* have also joined our ever-growing family.

Many stores have asked for special Kindles to represent their area. They have included everything from a beach bum to a vintner. Hundreds of Kindle cheerleaders in school colors with pennants and pom-poms have been cheering on high school and college teams throughout the country. Kindles have also made great gifts for professional conventions. Their talents seem to be endless. If you are interested in having a special Kindle made for your favorite organization, please call our Customer Service department at 215-822-6700.



Mrs. Claus and Santa



Byers' Choice Ltd. Open House



On the weekend of June 7th – 8th 2003, Byers' Choice will celebrate its 25th Anniversary by opening its doors to visitors from around the country. This gathering is planned to enable Byers' Choice enthusiasts to meet with friends and share in a variety of activities. Below is a list of a few highlights for you to enjoy:

- Tour the production floor where you can see firsthand how the Carolers and Kindles are made.
- Stroll through the Christmas Gallery with its Victorian Street and miniature villages where hundreds of figurines are on display.
- Enjoy a collection of more than 200 handcrafted nativities from around the world.
- A special piece, the *Silver Anniversary Father Christmas*, will be offered only during this weekend.
- Retired pieces from the Byers' Choice archives will be available through *sale at original prices, by silent auction, as door prizes and through games.*
- A bulletin board with hundreds of Caroler display photos. If you would like to send us a photo of your collection, we'll try to display it.

June 7 - 8, 2003

Looking forward to seeing you there!

Reservations must be made for:

- *The Silver Anniversary Father Christmas* (limit of one per attendee) • *The Factory Tour* (day and time)
- *The Light Lunch* — the choice of a sandwich or salad with your choice of beverage will be available for \$7.00.

For more information, please call Byers' Choice at 215-822-6700. Information about local happenings and area attractions can be found at www.byerschoice.com. Click OUR COMPANY then click VISIT OUR FACTORY.

To reserve your tour slot, Father Christmas or lunch, detach and mail this form to: Anniversary Celebration c/o Byers' Choice Ltd., PO Box 219, Chalfont, PA 18914-0219 by April 15, 2003 along with credit card information or your check payable to Byers' Choice Ltd. We will send your tickets and redemption cards in May 2003. Please note that each attendee is limited to one Silver Anniversary Father Christmas piece available for \$69.00 (includes 6% PA sales tax). No purchase is necessary for a factory tour.

ATTENDEES

FACTORY TOUR

FATHER CHRISTMAS

LIGHT LUNCH

COST

Day (circle) Time (circle)

(\$69.00)

(Sandwich or Salad \$7.00)

_____	SAT	SUN	AM	PM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
_____	SAT	SUN	AM	PM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
_____	SAT	SUN	AM	PM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
_____	SAT	SUN	AM	PM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Total Enclosed _____

Name _____

Phone Number _____

Address _____

E-Mail _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

MasterCard Visa Discover

Card Account Number

Exp. Date

Signature _____

Required on all credit card orders.





Victoria's Mother at 2003 Events

Many of our favorite retailers have started the tradition of hosting a special Byers' Choice event for their customers each year. This gives fans of the Carolers an opportunity to come together and meet with other enthusiasts who share common interests. This year we will have an added treat for those in attendance. Joyce has created *Victoria's Mother* as a special event piece for 2003. Retailers with plans to host a Byers' Choice event will be able to purchase a limited quantity of her to offer as a special thank you to a limited number of those in attendance.

Victoria's Mother will first appear at store events in early June and will then be visiting stores throughout the country this summer and fall. To find an event in your area, visit the OUR RETAILERS section of our website www.byerschoice.com.

Byers' Choice® Ltd.

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The *Golfers* return to tee off in the New Year with a change of costume.