



Caroler Chronicle®

2003 • Edition II

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Nutcracker Vendor and Children

We are pleased to present our new *Nutcracker Vendor* to accompany the *Children Holding Nutcrackers* in 2003. This new Caroler® will be adorned in a variety of winter clothing from past eras. He valiantly carries a selection of miniature nutcrackers in a woven basket from which his patrons can choose.

Nutcrackers have existed since the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries when nuts were offered during daily meals. In the eighteenth century, its roots were cemented in the Erzgebirge region of Germany as out-of-work miners skillfully whittled wood. A puppet carver from Seiffen created the first character nutcracker with a wide, moveable mouth used to crack nuts. Before these delightful characters were created, people used the expression, *it's a tough nut to crack*. The reasons are twofold; they used their teeth or large rocks to remove the actual nut, and their lives had become *hard as nuts*.

Early nutcrackers represented soldiers, kings and uniformed figures known to provide townspeople with a sense of security. Folklore abounds about the magical powers of nutcrackers. Displaying nutcrackers in a home is said to bring good luck.

Today's nostalgic nutcrackers depict toy soldiers, resplendent with black, blue and red helmets from the festive ballet, *The Nutcracker Suite*.



25th Anniversary Raises over \$29,000 for Charity



On June 7-8, a wonderful event was held at the factory in Chalfont.

Almost 5,000 enthusiasts of the Carolers[®] and Kindles[™] traveled from 39 different states to visit the gardens, go out onto the factory floor, visit with Byers' Choice artisans, and take part in a variety of games and contests.

One of the exciting events was a special auction where Jeff Byers handpicked twenty-five unique or highly unusual pieces for silent bid. Pieces included everything from a one-of-a-kind *Cowboy Santa* that was developed years ago for Neiman Marcus, to early *Apple Head* dolls created by Bob and Joyce, as well as a much sought after *Apple Lady*. Each bidder was able to select from one of five charities; all tolled, the pieces brought in an excess of \$29,000 to help a variety of worthwhile causes.



But you didn't need to be a high bidder to leave with a special figure. We opened the archives and pulled out a variety of older pieces and gave everyone who attended the weekend a chance to win the right to buy the piece at its original issue price. Everyone enjoyed looking through many *Old Friends* from ten plus years ago, looking for that one piece that they had been searching for many years. It was fun to see how many of the faces and costumes have changed and become more sophisticated!

The special piece available only for the weekend was a *Silver Father Christmas* holding a Victorian candy cone. During the late 1800's, most Christmas trees were decorated with very ornate packages and cones to hold

small presents and special treats such as candy and fruits. Children would scour the tree looking for all of the surprises and goodies on Christmas morning. The *Silver Father Christmas* helps to commemorate this tradition.

The highlight for many of the visitors was a tour of the factory floor where they got to see many of the artisans close up at work. Everyone left the tour with a greater appreciation of the enormous care that the artisans place in their work. From the first artisan who bends a coat hanger to create the body's frame to the dresser who finishes the hat and hair, each artisan takes great pride in his/her work, and it shows!

"It is a terrific opportunity for our artisans to see how much their creativity means to people," said Bob Byers, Jr. "They get an enormous amount of energy from hearing about what makes a Caroler or Kindle special to someone, then they go back and try to make their work even better. It is so powerful, that we hope to run a similar event again sometime in the future."





Thanksgiving Grouping

Pilgrims and Native Americans are brought to life in the Thanksgiving grouping as they share their harvested abundance of victuals. Bedecked in authentic garb, these Carolers are a welcomed addition to your Thanksgiving table. This year, we have brought back the *Native American Children* to complete the arrangement.



Pumpkin Harvest Boy

Our *Pumpkin Harvest Boy* is adorned in checkered shirt and denim patched overalls. To celebrate the season, he clutches a carved Jack-O-Lantern. A straw hat rests upon his head to provide shade while walking through the pumpkin patch. To order this piece, simply fill out the form below and take it to your favorite Byers' Choice retailer before August 10, 2003. The *Pumpkin Harvest Boy* will then be sent from Byers' Choice to your local retailer where you can pick it up in time for your fall decorating. This piece costs \$54.00 and the offer is limited exclusively through the *Caroler Chronicle*.



I would like to order one *Pumpkin Harvest Boy* \$ _____

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Store Name _____

Please return this form to your favorite Byers' Choice retailer no later than August 10, 2003 to receive your exclusive Pumpkin Harvest Boy.

Williamsburg Shopping Family

Our *Williamsburg Shopping Family* carries samples of delicacies and items made and sold in Colonial Williamsburg, highlighting Christmas traditions. The *Colonial Woman* clutches a wrapped sugar cone reminiscent of an era when chunks of the sweetener were chopped off, with iron sugar nippers, as needed. The *Colonial Man* carries a wooden barrel and a Virginia ham for a traditional holiday feast. A portion of the sales of these pieces helps support the efforts of Colonial Williamsburg.



Jack Tar

Jack Tar was the common moniker for ordinary British sailors in the 1800's. Named for the tar commonly used on sailing ships and slicked on their hair, these top mastmen wore uniforms that allowed freedom of movement. We've selected this costume from a life-sized wooden figure in the Maritime Museum in Philadelphia. The squeeze-box he is playing was used to entertain the crew and wile away the long hours at sea.



Patriotic Drummer

To honor and support the opening of the National Constitution Center on July 4, 2003, across from Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Byers' Choice has designed the *Patriotic Drummer*, a fine companion for the *Woman with Flag*. His patriotic finery is reminiscent of the historical Fife and Drum Bands that still march periodically through Independence Square in the city of brotherly love.



Kindle Angels

Meet our new summer additions — the *Kindle Angels*. Draped in white robes, with expanded golden wings, these cute *Angels* will flutter from your tree or mantle to reveal the importance of the moment.



Employee Spotlight . . . meet Holly Werner



Holly Werner, one of our special artisans, has been a dresser in the Kindle department for five years. She lends her talents to creating Kindles™ in their fashion finery. Married with two grown boys, Holly drives forty minutes each way to work because she loves the friendly atmosphere at Byers' Choice.

"I enjoy working with my hands and adore the people I work with," she says. "Everyone is comfortable here, and I've made good friends along the way. In fact, Joyce will come in and talk to us so I feel that we're all like family."

Holly adds hands, shoes, faces and hair to the Kindles, then dresses them in various swathes of

clothing, including hats, shoes and accessories. Because each Kindle varies in personality and boasts different designs, she says the amount dressed in one day is diverse.

"We focus on the quality not the quantity so we are able to create a nice product," she reveals. "We have so many different figures, and we all have our favorites. Yet, each day offers new discoveries. I enjoy crafts and this job allows me the opportunity to explore my own creativity due to the fact they're all handmade."

Holly is also an avid collector who plans to pass them on for the enjoyment of future generations.



Traditional Shopping Children

A family shopping spree wouldn't be complete without *Traditional Shopping Children* who join their parents and grandparents in 2003. Our young lady clutches packages, post cards and a straw hat. The young man carries a stuffed animal, Santa ornament and box filled to the brim with fresh berries. Their exuberance presents a rich tableau of festivity.



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2003 Display Size
Working Santa

