

features christmas 2010





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On the Cover



Sleigh Ride

The cover features our lovely **Woman in White Sleigh,** reminiscent of a simpler time and way of life.





note from joyce

JOYCE BYERS Founder & Designer, Byers' Choice Ltd.



The Harvest Celebration was such fun! It was great to see so many familiar faces. Judging from all of the lovely notes we received following the weekend, it appears a good time was had by all. I especially enjoyed seeing the witches you created in the Design Your Own Caroler® portion of the weekend. They were really great!

Caroler fans are like one big happy family which puts to mind the fact that family holidays are but a few weeks away. I can almost smell the Thanksgiving turkey roasting.

This issue of *Traditions Magazine* focuses on Christmas and some of our family's favorite traditions. I hope you enjoy learning about them. We would like to hear about your traditions, so please write or email and tell us what makes your holidays special. With your permission, we would like to share your experiences with the greater Byers' Choice family.

From our family to yours, we send wishes for a happy, healthy holiday season. May the spirit of Christmas be with you always.

Joyce



- 1 large can unsweetened pineapple juice1 gallon apple cider
- * 3/4 cup tea

Place in a cheesecloth sack:

- 1 tablespoon whole cloves1 tablespoon whole allspice
- * 2 sticks cinnamon

Pour the liquid ingredients into a large pot. Drop in cheesecloth spice sack. Let simmer very slowly for 4 to 6 hours. You can add water if it evaporates too much. Serves 20.

(Recipe works well in a crock pot.)

Friends — and strangers, too, as was sometimes custom — caroled their townsfolk on Christmas and were thanked with a glass of wassail.

Photo courtesy of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, VA







Using Accessories to Make a Great Display

A great display almost always includes accessories.

First decide what will be the focus of your display. Suppose we use Carolers®. Where should we put the display? The table inside the front door, an end table in

the living room, the mantel in the family room, or perhaps a centerpiece for the dining room table – let's do a display on each.

The table inside the front door is a great place to put the Postman. If the table is small, the Post-Mailbox, man, basket for cards and greens will make a simple yet charming display. If the table is long and nar-

row, you will want to incorporate additional figures such as Carolers holding postcards or packages, perhaps even a Singing Dog. In this display, I would add a Display Riser to add height to one side of the display. Camouflage the Riser with greens or a piece of cloth which coordinates with the room. A solid color such as white (snow) or green (grass) will be safe. Place the Postman facing the middle on one end of the table with the Mailbox and the Carolers arranged on the Risers on the other end of the table. They too should be facing slightly towards the center. If you have stairs behind the table, place the Risers on the side of the higher steps. This will give you a triangular display. Skip the basket of cards unless the table is very long in which case nestle them slightly behind the Postman. Pull the whole display together with greens sprouting from both ends of the arrangement.



Victorian Family with Chocolates

small glass balls to add sparkle will be all you need. Gently tilt the Carolers' heads upward. They won't break - trust us! This will give your display a more personal feeling.

Mantels are often the opposite challenge. Heads should be tilted down so that one gets the feeling the Carolers are looking at you. Mantels come in many lengths and heights. They are rarely more than 12 inches deep. Swags of green hung under the mantel with stockings, of course, will visually lower your display. Stack small packages on top of the mantel to use as risers so that you can vary

Continued on page 30

A side or end

table in the liv-

ing room will

present different

challenges. If it

is small, you probably want

no more than

three Carolers.

Choose colors to

blend with your

room. A lamp

or tall candle

behind the Car-

olers will add

height. Greens

or a graceful

wired bow in a

coordinating

color plus a few

SPREADGOODCHEER

Who sent the first Christmas card?

Sir Henry Cole, a preeminent British problem solver of 19th century England, conceived the idea of the first Christmas card.

In 1843 Sir Henry commissioned a London artist, John Callcott Horsley, to design a Christmas card for him to send to his many friends and acquaintances. Previously people exchanged handwritten notes in person when pos-

sible and by post when not. Perhaps it was the modernization of the postal system which sparked the idea of the card.

Of the 1,000 cards that were printed, only twelve of them are known to survive. The greeting is simply, "Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to You." The illustration expresses not only a celebration

and gathering of family and friends, but also a reminder to share concern for those less fortunate.

Printed cards quickly caught on in England and Germany. It took about 30 years, 1875, before Louis Prang

produced the first cards in Boston. Prang's cards were beautiful Victorian scenes of fruit and flowers of high quality and price. Unfortunately for Mr. Prang, Americans preferred the penny Christmas cards imported

from Germany.

Many of these cards have survived and can be purchased at antique shops and flea markets.

Christmas is the number one cardsending time of the year with more than two billion holiday cards sent within the United States. The changes in technology and the price of a stamp

have caused but a slight decline in this holiday tradition.

Don't forget to thank your mail carrier for the great job that he and his co-workers do every day in delivering our mail!





Above: Family with Postcards **Right:** Postman, English Mailbox (11"H)



Yes, Virginia! There is a Santa Claus.



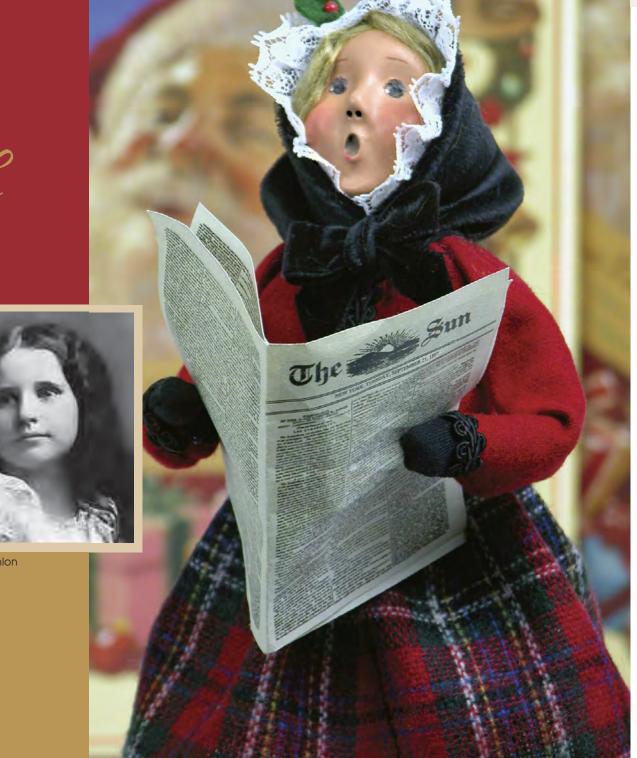
Betieve

Dear Editor,

I am eight years old. Some of
my little friends say there is
no Santa Claus. Papa says, "If
you see it in the Sun, it's so."

Please tell me the truth, is
there a Santa Claus?

Virginia o'Hanlon
115 W. 95th St.





Is there a Santa Claus?

Most parents rehearse the response to this question for years, while seeking advice from friends and family. What is the best way to handle what may be your child's first truly big disappointment? Certainly few of us have the verbal skills of Mr. Francis P. Church. The newspaper editor's response to eight-year-old Virginia O'Hanlon has stood the test of time. If you have not read his response to her letter originally printed in The Sun on Tuesday, September 21, 1897, please do so. Perhaps it will renew your faith in mankind and also in Santa Claus.

Read newspaper editor Francis P. Church's response to Virginia's letter on page 15.



Opposite: Santa with Workbench, Santa's Helpers

8 www.byerschoice.com BYERS' CHOICE LTD. 215-822-6700



Above: Woodland Santa, Woodland Boy & Girl, Polar Bear Cub (5.5"H x 8"L), 12" Snow Tree, Spooky Tree (25" High)

Nuterackers

At Byers' Choice, we think of nutcrackers as a well-established Christmas tradition. Traditional Christmas nutcrackers are carved from wood to resemble what could be described as "a rather frightful assortment of kings, princes and soldiers." Painted in uniforms of bright colors, their large bottom jaws open to hold and crush a nut when a lever at the back of the head is pressed down.

This type of nutcracker has been crafted in the forest regions of eastern Germany since the 15th century. Wood carving provides the major income for those who live there. The area around Sonnenberg and Erzgebirge is famous for many expertly-carved religious Christmas ornaments and decorations including creches and pyramids. The skill of these craftsmen is easily distinguished from others as wood carving is still an important part of their economy. If you are planning a trip to Germany, consider visiting this region. Their Christmas crafts are an art form!



Above: Nutcracker Vendor, Kids with Nutcrackers

Left: Nutcracker Advent Calendar; 15"W x 18.5"H

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Nutcrackers were quite popular during the 19th century. In 1816, E.T.A. Hoffman wrote the classic Christmas story, *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*, where the nutcracker comes to life.

In 1891, the legendary choreographer Marius Petipa commissioned Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky to compose music for the Nutcracker Ballet which premiered in Russia in 1892. This ballet was first performed in the United States in 1940.

Today, "the nutcracker" in its many forms continues as an undisputed Christmas tradition. $\$

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Traditional Shopping Family

the lost art of

GIVING

In this world of rush and

In this world of rush and hurry, gift giving is becoming a lost art. We are quick to resort to stuffing cash in an envelope or if we want to take a bit more time, buying those fancy plastic gift cards.

What is the ideal Christmas gift? The answer to this has evolved for centuries. Gold, frankincense and myrrh? We probably can't afford that and wouldn't know what to do with some of it if we could. Gingerbread and oranges? A possibility but not real exciting. A mechanical toy, an ark or a porcelain doll . . . probably would become boring very fast. A clever gadget or an electronic game will hold the attention a little longer, until it breaks.

Perhaps what we should consider are memories. How can we create them? What memories do you already have of your Christmases past? Remember when each family arrived at Grandfather's house for Christmas dinner with that special Christmas pie, cookies or trifle to share with the family? You don't bake anymore? Well you probably can. Get the children to help—you'll have a great time and make wonderful memories. Like the time Susie lifted the electric mixer out of the batter before she turned it off. We're still reminding her of that!

Our family used to make gifts for one another. The age and skill of the children had a lot to do with the choice of the gift. One year, dad and the boys built bird feeders from scraps of wood. Dad cut the pieces, and the boys assembled and painted them. We all enjoyed feeding and watching the birds for years and still have an interest in identifying the different species.

Another tradition of giving was our Christmas stockings. A friend of Bob's mother knit each new baby a Christmas stocking. They are still hung by the chimney with care each year. My mother made each of her great-grandchildren a needlepoint stocking and so the traditions and the memories continue.

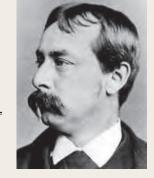
When deciding on the proper gift, think practical. Okay — a pair of plain black socks, which is what my grandmother gave each of her son-in-laws every Christmas, may be lackluster. But how about

Continued on page 30

"Yes, Virginia! There is a Santa Claus." Continued from page 9

Church's response as it appeared in the Tuesday, September 21, 1897 edition of *The Sun:*

"Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age.



They do not believe except [what] they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no child-like faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if you did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

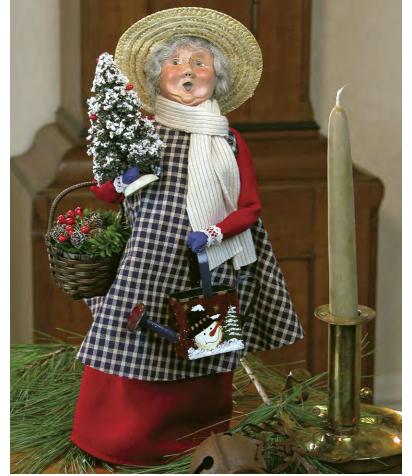
You may tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

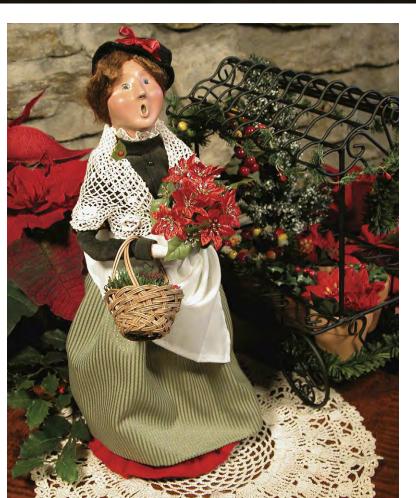
No Santa Claus! Thank God! he lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood."

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A Christmas Carol

We are very excited to announce that Gerald Dickens, the great-great grandson of famed author Charles Dickens, will be returning this year to tour the United States and perform the beloved story, *A Christmas Carol*. He will travel around the United States from early November through the second weekend of December.

To find a performance near you, please visit www.byerschoice.com.

Left (clockwise): Old English Santa, Gardening Mrs. Claus, Wine Santa, Woman Selling Holiday Flowers, Holiday Flower Cart (8"W x 6"D x 10.5"H)

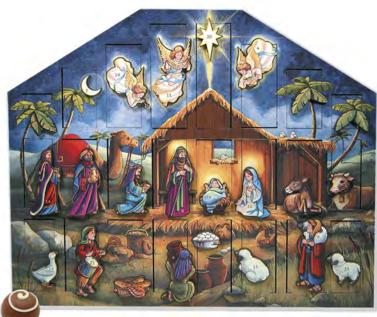


Traditional Wooden Advent Calendar

A tradition that lasts!



Christmas House Advent Calendar 22"H x 16"W



Nativity Advent Calendar 15"H x 18.5"W



Fireside Advent Calendar 15"H x 18.5"W



Santa's Sleigh Advent Calendar 15"H x 18.5"W

Treat Ideas:

Candies • Poems

Jewelry • Small Toy Cars

Stickers • Pictures

Coins • Special Notes



Gingerbread House Advent Calenda 22"H x 16"W

It's never too late to start a tradition like this for your family, one that will become a real treasure in the years to come.

For generations, families have marked the coming of Christmas in a variety of ways.

From simple chalk markings to lighting candles, families have employed unique ways to enjoy counting each of the 24 days before Christmas. The first printed calendar was produced in the 1800s by Gerhard Lang in Germany and consisted of miniature colored pictures that were then attached to a piece of cardboard for each day in December.

Advent calendars can be found everywhere Christmas is celebrated and have been made with many different themes. The traditional ones are still a paper/cardboard piece with a small treasure behind the doors. The treasures can range from a beautiful miniature religious picture, perhaps a little wooden toy or even a piece of candy (sure to cause problems when there is more than one child in the household).

Traditions by Byers Choice® Ltd. has produced a traditional Advent Calendar that combines the customs of the past with a new twist that is sure to please. Our wooden Advent Calendar is thoughtfully designed with 24 numbered doors. Behind each numbered door, there is room for a small surprise for each day. Imagine the excitement and joy the calendar creates in your home as the young ones find toy cars, sweets, jewelry and other small gifts each day until Santa arrives! The wooden calendars can be used year after year providing a tradition that your family is sure to treasure. *



Countdown to Christmas



DESIGN YOUR OWN CAROLER® FIGURINE



Byers' Choice Christmas Museum

Christmas memories are one of the most important parts of the season. Preserve the old ones and create new ones — a personalized Christmas card with a favorite holiday photo will become a cherished keepsake.



Christmas traditions and memories are important and stay with us for our entire lives. Many memories of Christmas go back to childhood and are filled with the faces of friends and family. For years, we have heard countless stories about how excited people became when they found the Caroler® that instantly reminded them of someone special in their life — both past and present.

Whether it is the shape of the face or the sparkle in the eye, the right Caroler can take on the personality of a friend or loved one. With so many new Caroler fans starting collections with figures to depict their family, we have created a way to custom design your own Carolers to best represent the people closest to you.

Designing your own Caroler is fun and easy! Some of you have had the opportunity to design your own figures at the Byers' Choice factory during one of our special open house weekends. There were so many choices - Traditional or Victorian, Hair & Eye Colors, Fabrics, Accessories - one could have spent hours playing around with the possible combinations. Watching a Byers' Choice artisan bring your creation to life was the icing on the cake!

> Carol Raphael of New York holds her custom Caroler the first "Design Your Own Caroler" figurine made at the Byers' Choice factory, September 2007.



Fortunately, if you can't wait for our next open house, you can visit www.byerschoice.com and start designing a custom Traditional or Victorian Caroler today.

You can match fabrics, hats, jackets and plaids online. Be creative! Choosing the perfect face - down to the eye color and freckles - makes each figure truly special. Maybe your Caroler will resemble a beloved relative or friend. Without a doubt, you will have a cherished keepsake to enjoy for years to come. *



endless

possibilities





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Christmas Tree

Estonia/Latvia lay claim to erecting the first public Christmas tree in the market square of Riga in 1441. About 1500, Martin Luther was inspired to bring a small fir tree home to his family on Christmas Eve while walking through the forest on a star lit winter evening. He decorated it with small white candles in honor of Christ's birth. Men actually worshiped the evergreen for centuries before either of these occasions.

A chronicle from 1570 tells of a tree decorated with winter fruit (apples, nuts, dates), pretzels and paper flowers erected in the Bremen guildhall for the delight of children on Christmas day. This custom became popular in the northern Protestant cities of Germany. This perhaps explains why it first arrived in America with the early Protestant settlers.

The royal families of Europe were familiar with the decorated Christmas tree long before it was accepted by the common people. In her journal for Christmas Eve 1832, Queen Victoria (then 13)

around a beautiful tree published by the "Illustrated London News" in 1848 initiated the British public to the idea of a Christmas tree. Charles Dickens was one of the first to embrace this tradition. Two years later, "Goodey's Lady's Book" published this image in America. It sparked the American's love of the Christmas tree. By the end of the 19th century, Christmas trees had become rather common in the United States.

Decorated trees have been documented in the United States as early as the 1770's. German immigrants from Massachusetts to Virginia, and as far west as Ohio, are known to have decorated evergreen trees for Christmas.

In 1851, Mark Carr anticipated the Christmas tree trend and was the first to bring a cart full of fresh trees to New York City. He sold every one of them and the following year returned with many more.

With the invention of electric lights and handdecorated glass ornaments, the Christmas tree

Charles Dickens was one of the first in Britain to embrace the tradition of a Christmas tree.

wrote "After dinner . . . we went into the drawing room . . . where there were two large round tables on which were placed two trees hung with lights and sugar ornaments. All the presents being placed under the tree . . . " A now well-recognized wood cut of Queen Victoria and her family standing

took on a whole new aura. Every family had to have one if for no other reason than to see the sparkle in a young child's eye as they viewed the magic in this very special holiday. *

- 25-30 million real trees are sold every year.
- Approximately 350 million Christmas trees, planted by farmers, are growing today.
- Real Christmas trees are grown in all fifty states and Canada. Eighty percent of all artificial trees are made in China.
- Real trees are a renewable, recyclable resource.
- There are 4,000 local Christmas tree recycling programs in the United States.



SRXINLIGHTSJK ONEERGREVEO EAKCFKRWRAOLN ADIGAERANRRXA LINYARDLTEGMM TLGTLIOFTCHJE ROHXTIBLXYBDN E H Q I P D M M S C L H T EAOOYQLAZLNAG ZNLEYKGZFERXZ

- Word Search -

Carols Evergreen Family

Fresh Holiday Liahts

Ornament

Presents Real Tree Recycle

Stocking

Tradition Wreath

- For every real Christmas tree harvested, 1-3 seedlings are planted.
- 350,000 acres are used to produce Christmas trees; much of this is preserved as green space.
- There are approximately 15,000 farms employing over 100,000 people in the Christmas tree industry.
- The average tree takes seven years to grow.

Left: Man & Woman with Skates Boy & Girl Skating; 9" Snow Tree

Boy & Girl Skating; 9" Snow T Opposite: Ice Princess

No two snowflakes are alike — wonder if the same is true of snowmen?

Try to find the twelve differences between these two photographs; answers below.



Right: Man Roasting Hot Dog, Woman with Coffee, Girl & Boy Roasting Marshmallows



Snowman with Mug — plain mug

Snowman with Snowballs — green mitten • Snowman with Marshmallows — hot dog on stick • Snowman with Popcom — longer popcom string • "Let It Snow" Snowman — extra holly leaf on hat • "Keep on Rolling" Snowman — green scart • "Roline A Little Cane" Snowman — Merry Christmas stgn • Snowman with Lights — extra coal buttons • "Santa Please Stop Here" Snowman — green hat • Snowman with Lights — extra coal buttons • "Santa Please Stop Here" Snowman — green hat • Snowman with Mura — plain mura
 Snowman with Mura — plain mura



Right: Icing Bakerkin Kindle Shortbread Cookie Chalet (12"W x 10"H x 12"D) Below: Gingerbread Santa Gingerbread Mrs. Claus











"Decorating" Continued from page 5

the heights of the figures. I think Santa, Mrs. Claus and Kindles $^{\text{\tiny M}}$ will make a great display. Put Mr. and Mrs. Claus off center, slightly facing into the center. Fill the remaining space with Kindles doing lots of mischievous things. Have them peeking out of a stocking, swinging from the garland, decorating a gingerbread house or building toys. Think of them as rascally children and you'll get the idea.

Santa and Kindles aside, one family I know has collected a different Caroler to remind them of each member of their family. They stand each one above that person's stocking and fill the rest of the mantel with greens, small packages, pretty bows and glass ornaments. What a lovely tradition!

Thanksgiving, a holiday centered around food and family, is another opportunity to make an interesting Caroler display.

The dining room table can be the biggest challenge of all. The space is great, however, it must look good from all four sides. One way we have dealt with this was to place a mirror in the center of the table and pretend it was a skating pond. The Skaters look perfectly natural twirling in all directions. You can place snow-covered trees and candles of various heights around the pond. Artificial snow can be a real mess, but it really adds to the wintry feel.

A family friend places a Caroler representing a family member at the top of each setting on her Christmas table. Everyone has fun guessing which seat is theirs. They then get to keep the Caroler as a Christmas memento.

Thanksgiving, a holiday centered around food and family, is another opportunity to make an interesting Caroler display. Use a sideboard or serving table with one side next to a wall. Place a large platter or tray upright against the wall as a background. Improvise small risers by using a stack of coasters, jar lids, jewelry boxes, etc. to give the Pilgrim figures different heights and place them in front of the platter. Gourds, Indian corn, or colorful autumn leaves from the yard will fill in around the base of your display.

We always enjoy receiving pictures of your Caroler displays. It is fun to share ideas with others. Don't hesitate to send shots of your displays to us at PO Box 158, Chalfont, PA 18914. With your permission, we will post them on Facebook® or on our website for all to enjoy. **

"Lost Art of Gift Giving" Continued from page 15

a donation to his favorite charity, tickets to a sporting event or movie for him and his family?

Not all gifts have to be given on Christmas day. An offer to help set up the tree or hang lights on the house is a great gift for an elderly neighbor or friend, and the whole family can participate. A fresh wreath for the door lets someone know you are thinking of them.

Pepper Christmas day with activities that evoke memories. Christmas crackers are lots of fun and small wrapped gifts in front of each place at the table can be a Yankee swap gift exchange. Who can find the glass pickle hidden in the tree? He gets a special gift. If you have more than one child, you may want to use more than one pickle – this is a Byers tradition. How about a play written and performed by the children? Or a performance by that up-and-coming clarinetist? Why not sing carols? So no one can carry a tune – who cares! That is what makes it fun and builds memories.

The best gifts are happy memories. Not to say that the new bike or the first cell phone can't be a part of these memories, but in a world where we all have so much, let's think about what is everlasting — the joy of Christmas as expressed in family, friendship and charity. *



Rindles™ guardians of the christmas spirit



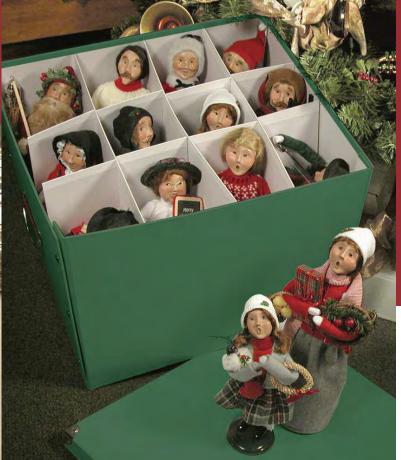
Above: Tangle (Kindle with Christmas Lights)
Right: Dingaling (Kindle with Jingle Bell)
Top: Pops (Kindle Stringing Popcorn)
Cole (Kindle with Coal)
Checker (Kindle with List)

Have you ever wondered how a snowman seems to wink just as you walk by, or how the lights on the tree seem to have an extra sparkle on Christmas Eve? Consider Kindles. How does Santa manage to fit down even the tightest of chimneys? It's our Kindles at work again, putting the twinkle in the eye of even the smallest child believing in the magic of Christmas morning.

Far away in a land where snow falls in glittering heaps like confectioner's sugar, there lives a group of sprites whose vast experience, energy and spirit have given them an extraordinary opportunity. These aren't just elves, they'd be quick to point out with pride and distinction. They are Kindles, Guardians of the Christmas Spirit.







STORING YOUR CAROLERS®

A tidy little home for your Carolers! Safely store your collection until the next time you put it on display. Stores twelve Caroler figurines; made of sturdy cardboard with protective vinyl cover.

Caroler Condo (17.5"L x 15.5"W x 14"H)

Christmas is forever, not for just one day, for loving, sharing, giving, are not to put away like bells and lights and tinsel, in some box upon a shelf.

The good you do for others is good you do yourself.

Norman Wesley Brooks



Kranz (Kindle with Wreath), Wraps (Kindle with Packages) Tangle (Kindle with Christmas Lights)

www.byerschoice.com

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