

### features christmas 2012





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#### On the Cover



"Walking in a Winter Wonderland" Santa

To learn more about this piece, please turn to page 14.





### note from joyce

#### **JOYCE BYERS**

Founder & Designer, Byers' Choice Ltd.



Another holiday season is about to begin and I can't wait! Reflecting on the past, and at the same time, peeking into the future. I marvel at the way technology and traditions accumulated over centuries mingle to preserve Christmas.

This December, Bob and I will visit several European Christmas Markets. We will shop for the traditional handmade gifts and ornaments, sample gingerbread and drink spiced warm wine as millions of people have done every Christmas for six hundred years. One difference will be that we will record the experience with pictures taken with a phone so small it can easily be carried in a pocket. Almost instantaneously, we will be able to share our experiences with anyone in the world.

Many visitors who come to Byers' Choice each year take pictures to share with family and friends. Many enjoy dressing in 19th century capes, hats, etc., and taking pictures for Christmas cards. We enjoy this as much as they do.

This year I hope you will take the time to savor Christmas traditions, not just as a spectator sitting on your big, comfy chair watching the world go by, but by joining the shoppers at the mall, singing Christmas carols, or joining a friend for a drink of good cheer and a toast for a happy new year.

"Christmas comes but once a year!" I hope you make the most of it. Merry Christmas to all, and may the spirit of a good traditional Christmas be with us for another six hundred years.



## Highlights

#### Happy Birthday, Charles Dickens!

Leading us in song and with a final flourish, Gerald Charles Dickens opened our Dickens celebration on the weekend of September 14, 2012. Out came the birthday cake specially designed by Carlo's Bakery (TLC's the Cake Boss), and an unforgettable weekend began.

The factory floor had been transformed into an English street, filled with London cries selling their wares, a fortune teller who could see the future in your palm, and a pub to quench your thirst with a quick half pint. Music filled the streets and Punch & Judy played to raucous laughter. A magic lantern, Victorian costumes, and performances by Dickens' great-great grandson took us back in time.

But somehow, the Carolers® stole the show. People waited to have a chance to pick out the clothing for their own personalized Caroler and see it created right before their eyes. Many decided to design a Witch in keeping with the season. And the factory tours allowed individuals to see firsthand the magic of the Byers' Choice artisans and ask how a Caroler is brought to life.

It was a great weekend, and we want to thank everyone who traveled from all over the country to come and help us to celebrate. If you happened to miss this year's festivities, please check out all of the pictures on our Facebook page, and we hope to see you at our next event! www.facebook.com/byerschoice \*



Can you think

of others?



#### The Christmas Market

In 2010, Byers' Choice created a "Christmas Market" display for the National Christmas Museum in Paradise, PA. We had such fun with the project that we decided to introduce it as a series. Our first two Christmas market stalls include a stall filled with straw ornaments and one with nutcrackers. Look for these accessories and the "Woman Selling Straw Ornaments" and the "Straw Ornament Family" at your favorite Byers' Choice retailer this Christmas. \*

Europe's Christmas
Markets celebrate the
season with dazzling
light displays, handmade
crafts, and holiday fare
for all to enjoy!





Nutcracker Vendor, Kids with Nutcrackers, Nutcracker Market Stall

The atmosphere of a typical European Christmas Market is further enhanced by the aromas of hot chestnuts, grilled sausages and other tasty snacks. Youngsters especially like the gingerbread biscuits known as Lebkuchen, marzipan figures and other sweets.



www.byerschoice.com

BYERS' CHOICE LTD. 215-822-6700

Woman Selling Straw Ornaments



Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze, 1851

**First American President** & Father of Our Nation



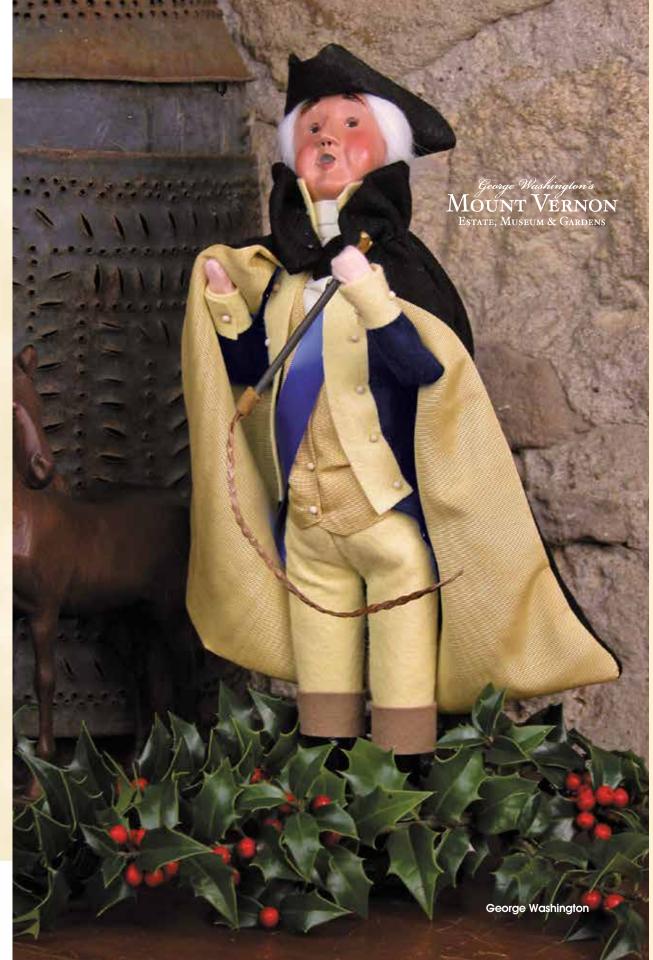
If you haven't visited Mount Vernon, you might want to plan a trip this holiday season. Mount Vernon joyfully decks the halls for Christmas with themed decorations (including 12 Christmas trees), a five-footwide gingerbread replica of the Mansion, historical chocolatemaking demonstrations, and 18th-century dancing!

www.mountvernon.org

Washington

Many Byers' Choice fans enjoy history and have been requesting a George Washington Caroler® figurine. We have produced other historical figures in the past–including Benjamin Franklin, Betsy Ross and Thomas Jefferson-and are excited to release General George Washington in 2012.

> We have been working with the Mount Vernon Ladies Association for years developing George and Martha Washington figures in various costumes. Mount Vernon has had an exclusive on these figurines until this year, when it was decided they would share this figure of George. We are thrilled and thought you would be, too! The style of dress for George was taken from the famous painting of George Washington crossing the Delaware on Christmas Eve 1776, during the American Revolutionary War. Proceeds from the sale of this figure will help support the Mount Vernon Ladies Association.





### Washington's

#### Ingredients:

- 1 pint brandy
- 1/2 pint rye whiskey
- 1/2 pint Jamaican rum
- 1/4 pint sherry wine
- 12 eggs, separated
- 12 tablespoons sugar
- 1 quart milk
- 1 quart heavy cream

#### Directions:

- Mix liquors first in separate container.
- Separate egg yolks and whites in separate bowls.
- Add sugar to beaten egg yolks.
- Add liquor slowly to egg yolk mixture, continuing to beat until well incorporated.
- Beat the egg whites until stiff and gently fold these into the egg/ liquor mixture.
- Add the milk and then the cream, always beating slowly.
- · Let this sit in the refrigerator for several days (4-7) to cure.
- Serve topped with whipped cream. Cheers!



# Santa Claus

Father Christmas (to name just a few), is a figure with legendary and folkloric origins. He is generally depicted as a portly, jolly, white-bearded man, wearing a red coat with white collar and cuffs. Let's not forget the red trousers, spectacles and black leather belt and boots. Joyce has been designing Santas for the past 35 years and has created many variations of this historic character!





Bless our troops this Christmas and throughout the year.





A good time is coming,
I wish it were here,

The very best time in the whole of the year;

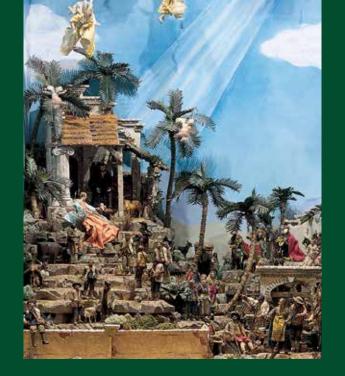
I'm counting each day on my fingers and thumbs,

The weeks that must pass before Santa Claus comes!

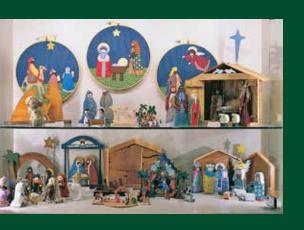
#### Clement C. Moore

author who
bequeathed us the
image of a fat, jolly,
white-bearded
St. Nicholas from
the poem,
"A Visit from Saint Nick"
(more currently known
as "Twas the Night
Before Christmas").



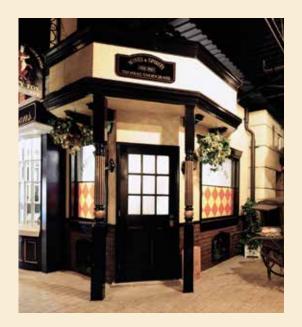


Our Christmas Museum is home to more than two hundred créches, or nativities, from around the world. The créches vary in size, details and style but they are all amazing in their own special way! The highlight of the collection is an antique 18th century Italian presepio, on display year round.





# Christmas Museum and Giff Emporium





Upon entering the Christmas Museum, guests are instantly transported to **Dickens' London**, with cobblestone streets, taking in the flavor of the old city.

#### A special treat for Christmas enthusiasts is a trip to the Byers' Choice Christmas Museum and Gift Emporium.

Guests can meander through festive Christmas displays inhabited by hundreds of Carolers $^{\mathbb{R}}$  and Kindles $^{\mathbb{T}M}$  figurines. It is Christmas 365 days of the year at Byers' Choice Ltd., located in Bucks County, PA!

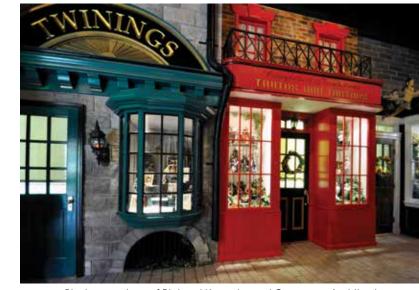
As guests enter The Olde
Curiosity Shoppe, the scale
of the attractions change
with hundreds of Carolers

on display in heartwarming Victorian wintertime settings. Here Carolers can be seen

completing their Christmas shopping, skating on a frozen mill pond and acting out holiday traditions from around the world. The Byers' Choice Christmas Museum is a journey to Dickensian England with its life-sized London street scene and shop windows dressed for the holidays. The St. James Theatre, inspired by the last theater in which Charles Dickens performed, presents a brief video of the history of Byers' Choice.

A favorite part of the museum tour is the observation deck where visitors can watch the artisans bring the Carolers to life. From time to time, viewers can see Joyce on the workshop floor!

Let's not forget the gardens and grounds surrounding the Christmas Museum – as special as the exhibits inside!



Photos courtesy of Richard Kapusta and Company Architects

#### Byers' Choice Christmas Museum and Gift Emporium

Open: Monday – Saturday, 10 am to 5 pm; Sunday, Noon to 5 pm

Address: 4355 County Line Road Chalfont, PA 18914

www.byerschoice.com

Thousands visit Byers' Choice yearly to experience the sights, sounds and tastes of Christmas. We are glad to be able to share our love of the Christmas season with them!

~ Joyce Byers







that we bring back our larger Santas. This year, we are introducing a Santa that is approximately 19 inches high and attached to a wood base. The inspiration for our "Walking in a Winter Wonderland" Santa came from a retailer, Country Farm and Home, in Mifflinburg, Penna. They suggested we do a series of Santas inspired by our favorite Christmas carols. We plan to introduce a new display Santa each year with a Christmas song theme that is suggested by our fans on Facebook. \*\*

### "Winter Wonderland"

was written in 1934 by
Felix Bernard and Richard Smith.
Although it is considered a
Christmas standard, the holiday
itself is never mentioned in the
lyrics. Through the decades,
it has been recorded over
150 times by various
artists and is a favorite
Christmas carol.

Sleigh bells ring, are you listening? In the lane, snow is glistening.



Fireside Advent Calend

# The Advent calendar

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 the counting of the 24 days before Christmas.

The Traditions Advent Calendar is thoughtfully designed with 24 numbered doors behind which small surprises can be hidden for each day. This wooden calendar can be used year after year providing a tradition that your family is sure to treasure!

Please visit our website
for our complete line of wooden
Advent Calendars:
www.byerschoice.com

#### After many years, we feel that we have developed the best way to handcraft larger Carolers® for display.

Our first attempt was made in the early 1980's at the request of a display company from New York. These figures met with enough enthusiasm to encourage us to keep trying, but we never hit on something that we felt worked well.

Through the years, we've tried various materials such as stuffed muslin bodies and plaster strips used for casts. Neither was good! The heads were also made from a variety of materials that never quite captured the look of our Carolers. Most of the large figures were Santas, but there were also Carolers and a Drummer Boy that was actually animated again, not good!



Finally, we think we have it! Our 2012 large "Walking Caroling Man and Woman," plus the "Walking in a Winter Wonderland" Santa, capture the Byers' Choice handcrafted spirit of Christmas. \*



Christmas holiday.

Here's wishing for a

white Christmas!

Many families hit

the slopes during the

#### Man with Pocket Watch

The inspiration for this figure was an early Caroler® figurine. The original piece is on display at the Byers' Choice Christmas Museum where guests have frequently commented on his unique character and interest in purchasing him. We are happy to introduce him into the line this year!



Santa's Sleigh Advent Calendar

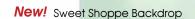


HERSHEY'S Resin Gingerbread House

New! Wine & Cheese Table



Decorated Tree with Lights (Requires 3 "AA" Batteries)







Single Gift Box

Red Wagon with Toys





Polar Bear Cub

New!

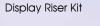
Caribou

Double Gift Box

Fireplace with Candelabra

New! Street Clock (Requires one "N" Battery)







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# Christmas Greens and other fresh holiday decorating ideas!







Fresh greens, flowers and fruits from your garden or market can make great Christmas décor.

Here are a few ideas to make lovely decorations this holiday season!

Holly and Ivy: both remain green all winter long and remind us of springtime and eternal life. Use on your mantel or weave into a wreath or garland.

**Berries:** clusters of red berries add bright color and texture to wreaths, centerpieces and swags.

**Pomander:** an apple, orange or lemon studded with fragrant cloves. Interesting designs can be made with the spices. Wrap a ribbon around the fruit and tie in a loop at one end for hanging.

**Evergreens:** a variety can be used in garland for an interesting mix of textures and shades of green.

Magnolia: dress up the backs of your chairs by tying graceful swags of magnolia leaves and eucalyptus sprigs to each arm with a festive Christmas ribbon.

**Eucalyptus:** known for its graygreen color, unique leaf shape and fresh scent, eucalyptus is a great choice for wreath making. Add a bit of holiday cheer by tucking in sprigs of red berries and dried flowers.

Paperwhites: greet guests with a bright arrangement of seasonal paperwhites, heather, juniper, and moss in a planter that hangs on your front door. \*

"Christmas waves a magic wand over this world, and behold, everything is softer and more beautiful."

~ Norman Vincent Peale





**Step One:** Select an area in your home to build your display. Once the location is decided, you will want to create a variety of different heights to add interest to your display. Our Byers' Choice Display Riser Kits work well for this. But in this example, we've used a variety of different objects such as boxes, books and coasters to create height.

**Step Two:** Next we've separated our Carolers by size and color so that we can group our families much the same way that they would pose for a family portrait. Place the taller ones in back and kids up front. Take a minute to match and balance color while thinking about how your eye will move across the display.

**Step Three:** Continue to fill in your display by adding more color and height variety. Each Caroler placed within the display helps to tell a story. Some children are huddled together while others stay close to their parent's side.

**Step Four:** Finish positioning your Carolers making sure that all of their faces can be seen, and that they are interacting with one another. A simple turn to one side can create a relationship between two figures. The wire armatures within the Carolers allow you to bend arms and lean them from side to side, as if they are swaying to the music. Some fresh evergreens clipped from the yard add just the finishing touch to soften the display and set the festive mood.









## decorating with the Carolers

It's that special time of year once again. Time to put on your favorite Christmas music, make a steaming pot of tea and start a fire in the fireplace before the decorating begins. Decorating for the holidays is so much fun as each box of decorations is filled with special memories of celebrations through the years. When it comes to creating this year's Caroler® displays, try a few of these helpful tips to make a festive arrangement. We like to approach creating a scene with Carolers much the same way that we would create a composition for a painting. There are certain basic elements of balance, color and contrast that can be used as a guide to make this year's display really stand out.



### Deck the Halls Facebook Contest

Post a picture of your Christmas Caroler® display on our Facebook page before Dec. 25th, and you'll be entered to win a \$150.00 gift certificate to **www.byerschoice.com**. What a fun way to see how others display Carolers and to get ideas for next year. A winner will be selected the first week of January. Happy decorating!! **www.facebook.com/byerschoice** 

### The Twelve Days of Christmas





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

According to the **Christmas Price Index**, buying every item mentioned in the carol "The Twelve Days of Christmas" would cost more than \$100,000!

In 2011, buying just one set of each verse in the song would have cost **\$24,263**.

### fun Facts

- Byers' Choice introduced the Partridge in a Pear Tree Santa, the first Caroler in our "Twelve Days of Christmas" series, in 2006.
- The "Twelve Days of Christmas" is one of our most popular series, with many of the top selling figures from 2009.
- The last two pieces in the collection, Eleven Pipers Piping and Twelve Drummers Drumming, were introduced in 2011 completing the series.

364
... the total number of presents given out in the "Twelve Days of Christmas" carol.

The Twelve Days of Christmas is probably the most misunderstood part of the church year among Christians who are not part of liturgical church traditions. Contrary to much popular belief, these are not the twelve days before Christmas, but in most of the Western Church, are the twelve days from Christmas until the beginning of Epiphany (January 6th). The 12 days count from December 25th until January 5th. In some traditions, the first day of Christmas begins on the evening of December 25th with the following day considered the First Day of Christmas (December 26th). In these traditions, the twelve days begin December 26th and include Epiphany on January 6th.

**Above:** Partridge in a Pear Tree Santa, Two Turtledoves Woman, Three French Hens Chef, Four Calling Birds Man, Woman with Five Gold Rings, Six Geese A-Laying Man **Right:** Seven Swans A-Swimming Woman, Eight Maids A-Milking Woman, Nine Ladies Dancing Woman, Ten Lords A-Leaping Man, Eleven Pipers Piping Man, Twelve Drummers Drumming Man





### **C**HRISTMAS COOKIE exchange

Baking the endless variety of Christmas cookies can be such a chore during the busy holiday season. Hosting a Cookie Exchange or Swap is a great way to save time and have fun with all of your other baking friends! Each participant bakes a large batch (a few dozen cookies) of one type of cookie. Everyone then gets together and shares their baked goods and recipes. This gives each baker a good variety, and yet only requires baking one recipe. Enjoy the treats of the holiday season without the hassle of baking them all. \*

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 2 cups flour

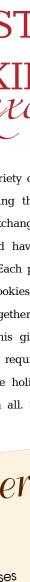
Cream butter and 1 cup sugar until light. Add egg, and molasses; beat well. Combine flour, spices, salt, and soda; add to creamed mixture, blending well. Shape into small balls and roll in sugar.

Here is a simple "Gingersnaps" recipe to get your Christmas Cookie Exchange started!

- 3/4 cup butter
- 1/4 cup molasses
- 1 tbsp. ginger,

Bake at 325° F for 8 to 12 minutes.

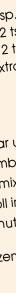
Makes 2 to 3 dozen cookies. Enjoy!





• 1/2 tsp. salt • 1/2 tsp. baking soda

extra sugar





**GRASU** 

DANYC

**PLOLIOPL** 

**ETPERPMNIPS** 

KEIOCOS

**SSKNILREP** 

**DUGRPMO** 

GINCI

ausmets: cauqà: snaat: cipuamou; jojilpop; gumatop; licorice; peppermints; icing; molasses; cookies; chocolates, sprinkles

**OTCLAHOCES** 

NCNOMAIN

**CERICOLI** 

**SMLAESOS** 

is a popular Christmas treat all over the world.

Making and decorating a gingerbread house is a favorite

Christmas tradition that the whole family can enjoy!

Gingerbread Word Scramble How many can you and your children figure out together?

Christmas cookies

and happy hearts,

this is how the

holiday starts.





Above: Vanilla Icing Gingerbread House, Sugar Cookie Cottage Gingerbread House (Resin)





Rock Candy Chimney Gingerbread House, Coco Bakerkin, Red Candy Cane Tree

# SWEET . memories

If you want to include gingerbread in your family's holiday traditions this Christmas, start preparing now! You'll find fun gingerbread recipes, ideas for gift-giving, tips on making gingerbread houses, games and more online or at your local library. We hope your holiday season is filled with the sweetest memories ever!

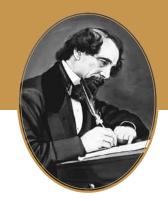
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1812-1870

#### Why celebrate the 200th anniversary of Dickens' birth?

Certainly no other author comes close in his influence on Byers' Choice. Charles Dickens has been called "the man who invented Christmas," as he revolutionized the way British and American societies celebrate the holiday. "A Christmas Carol" speaks to our mission of bringing people together and remembering those less fortunate. And through all of his works, Charles Dickens strove to improve the world in which he lived.

As we commemorate his 200th birthday, Byers' Choice would like to recognize how much Dickens inspired the world. He, like the reformed Scrooge, "knew how to keep Christmas well." \*

Gerald Charles Dickens returns to the United States this Christmas season to perform the holiday classic, "A Christmas Carol." Please visit our website for his complete 2012 Tour Schedule.



#### www.byerschoice.com

- Gerald is the great-great grandson of Charles Dickens
- Gerald has been performing
  "A Christmas Carol" at Byers'
  Choice for the past 7 years
- Charles Dickens was only 31 years old when he wrote "A Christmas Carol"



Spirit of Christmas Past, Spirit of Christmas Present, Marley's Ghost, Scrooge, Mrs. Cratchit, Bob Cratchit & Tiny Tim, Spirit of Christmas Future

"I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year."

~ Charles Dickens, A Christmas Carol

### Christmas Around the

Probably the most celebrated holiday in the world, Christmas is a product of hundreds of years of religious traditions from around the globe. Though customs and celebrations can be surprisingly different from country to country, the spirit remains the same everywhere!



In England, the day after Christmas is called Boxing Day. One theory behind the name is that the donation boxes placed in churches where parishioners deposited coins for the poor were opened and the contents distributed on December 26th. \*



Christmas crackers or bon-bons are an integral part of Christmas celebrations in the United Kingdom.





Baboushka is a traditional Russian Christmas figure who distributes presents to children. Legend is told that she declined to go with the Wise Men to see Jesus because of the cold weather. However, she regretted not going and set off to try and catch up, filling her basket with presents. She never found Jesus, and that is why she visits each house, leaving toys for good children. \*

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### A Polish Christmas



#### - Chrusciki -

#### Polish crullers also known as "Angel Wings"

- 3 Egg yolks
- 1 Egg

- 1 tsp. Vanilla
- 1/2 tsp. Salt

• 1 Cup Flour

• 1 tsp. Rum

- 1/4 Cup Powdered Sugar
- Oil for deep frying

Beat the egg yolks, egg and salt together until stiff.

Blend in sugar, rum and vanilla; mix until smooth.

Add flour to mixture and mix well.

On a heavily floured surface, knead the dough until the surface of the dough is blistered (approx. 7 minutes).

Separate dough into several portions; roll very thin (1/16 inch thick).

Cut dough into strips 1-1/2 inches wide, 4 inches long.

In the middle of each strip, cut a one-inch slit the long way. Pull one end of the strip through the slit so that it looks like a bow-tie.

Heat oil to 375 degrees and fry quickly until golden. Turn only once; drain on paper towels.

Dust with powdered sugar.

Makes 3-4 Dozen

An elaborate Polish Christmas tradition is "Wiqilia," a strict 24-hour fast that begins on Christmas Eve and ends with a huge Christmas feast. In honor of the star of Bethlehem, the meal cannot begin until the first star of night appears. Once it comes to view, a special rice wafer blessed by the parish priest called "oplatek," is broken into pieces and shared by all. It is then that the meal can begin. The feast consists of twelve courses, one for each Apostle. The table is always set with an extra seat in case a stranger or the Holy Spirit should appear to share the meal.

At supper's end Father Christmas, known as The Star Man (often the parish priest in disguise), pays a visit to each home with rewards for all the good children. Koledy, or carols, are sung and presents are opened before the family heads off to the church for midnight mass. \*

continued on page 36



Homemade stollen with dried fruits and nuts is a traditional yeast bread eaten during the Christmas season in Germany.

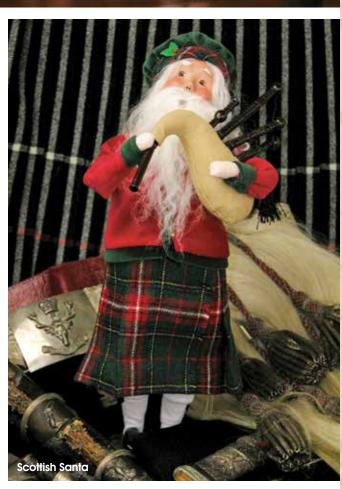


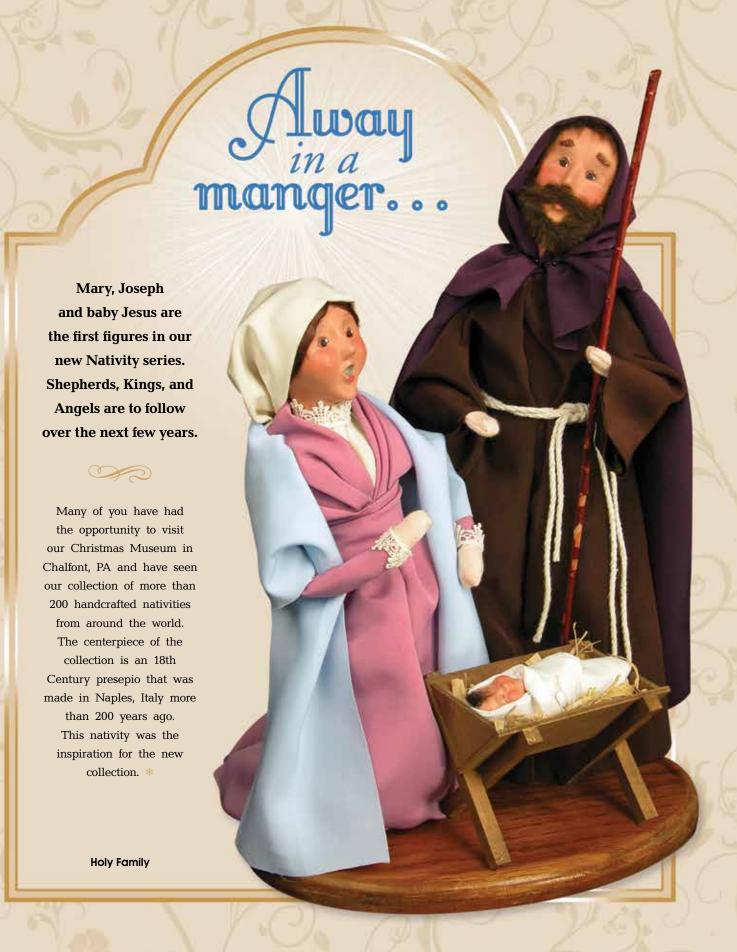


In parts of Germany, people believe that the Christ Child sends a messenger on Christmas Eve. He appears as an angel in a white robe and crown, bearing gifts. The angel is called "Christkind." There is also a Christmas Eve figure called "Weihnachtsmann" or Christmas Man, he looks like Santa Claus and also brings gifts. \*

**In Scotland,** Christmas Eve is observed on December 24th. In some regions of the country, the day is called "Sowans Nicht." The name probably comes from "sowans" — a dish made from oat husks and fine meal steeped in water that is eaten on this day.

A popular tradition practiced on Christmas Eve is burning the branches of a rowan tree, which signifies that any bad feeling between friends or relatives had been put aside for Yuletide. It is believed that if the fire goes out on Christmas Eve, the household would suffer bad luck the coming year. \*





Buchs, Choice Ltd
4355 County Line Road Chalfont, PA 18914

Customer #

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www.byerschoice.com





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