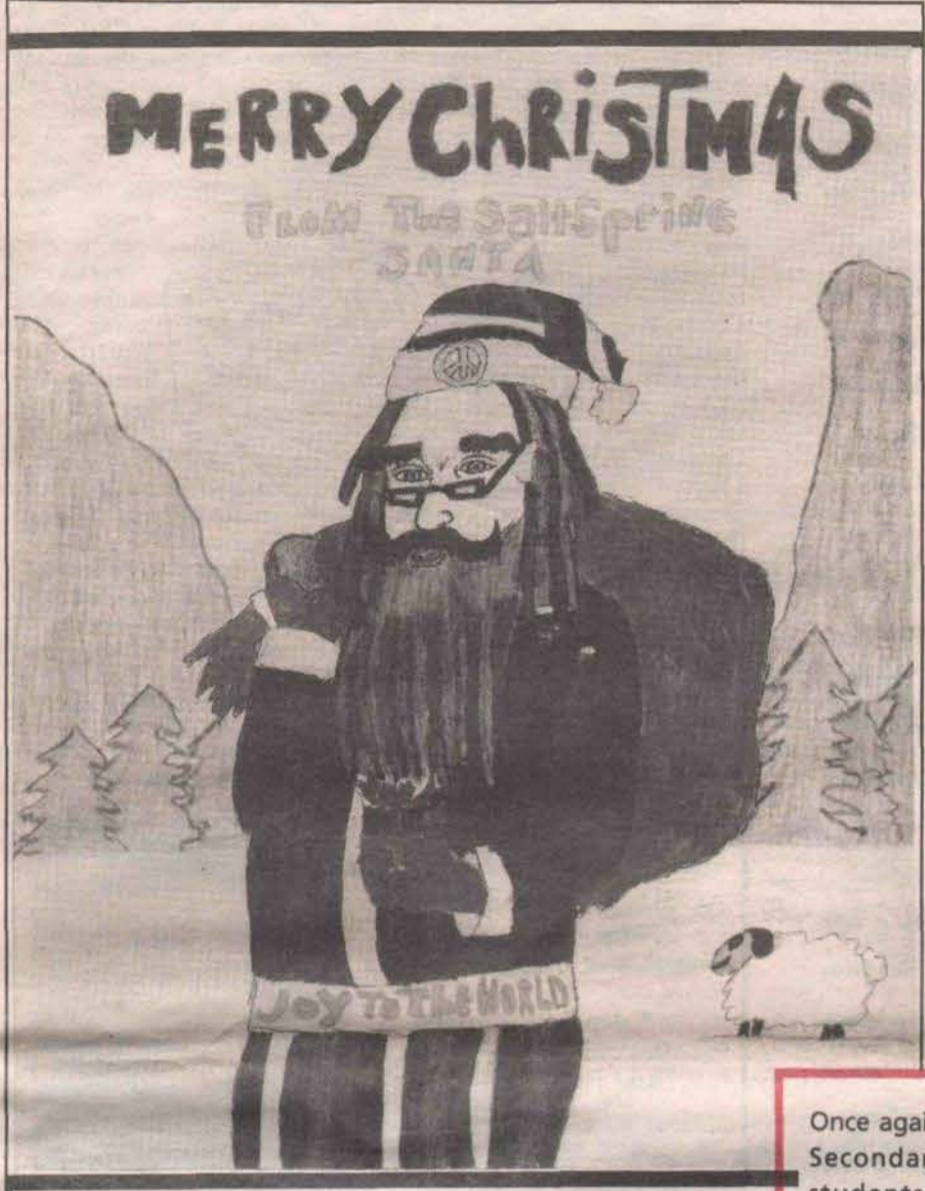


Driftwood

Gulf Islands

SECTION B Wednesday, December 21, 1994

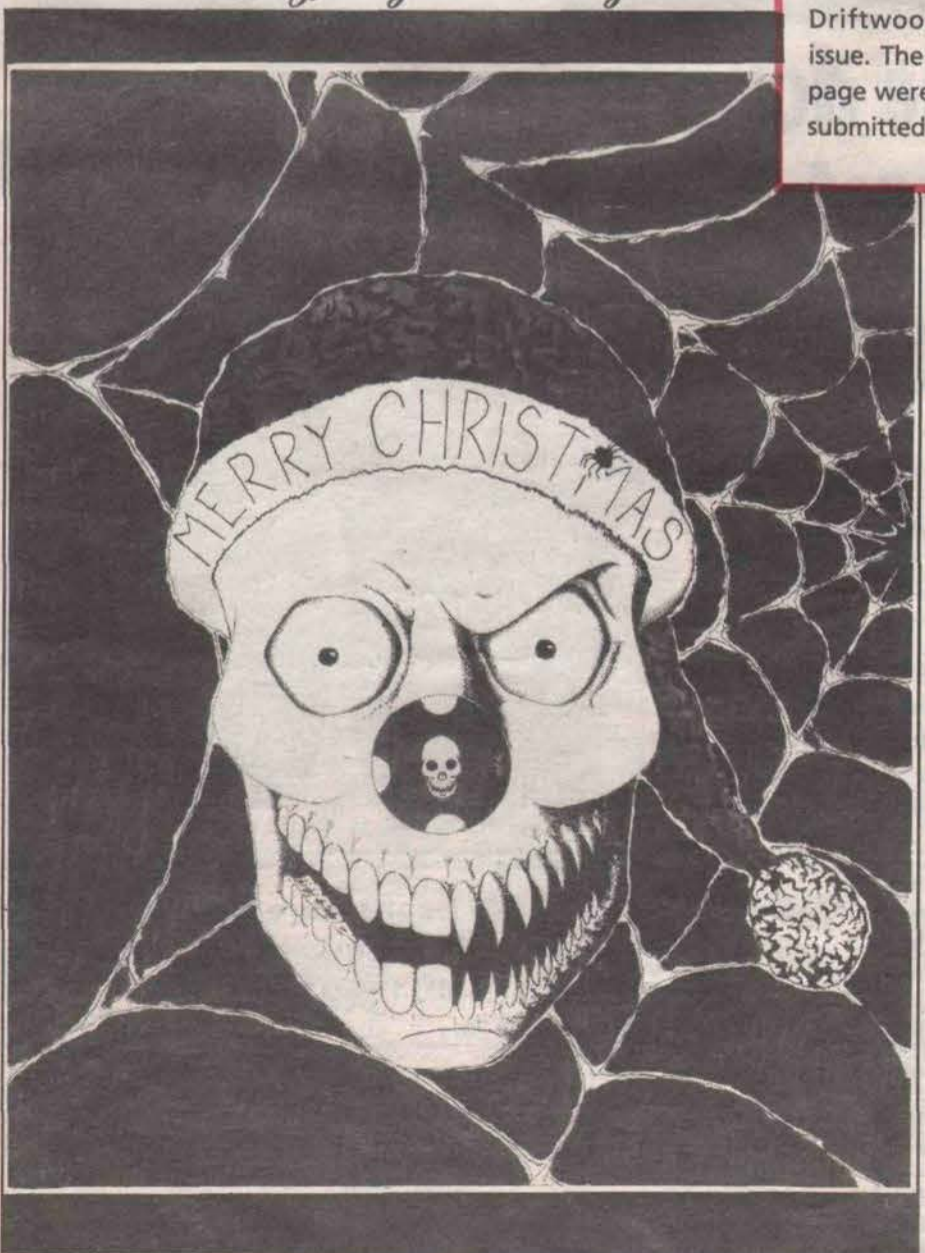


Jenny Armstrong

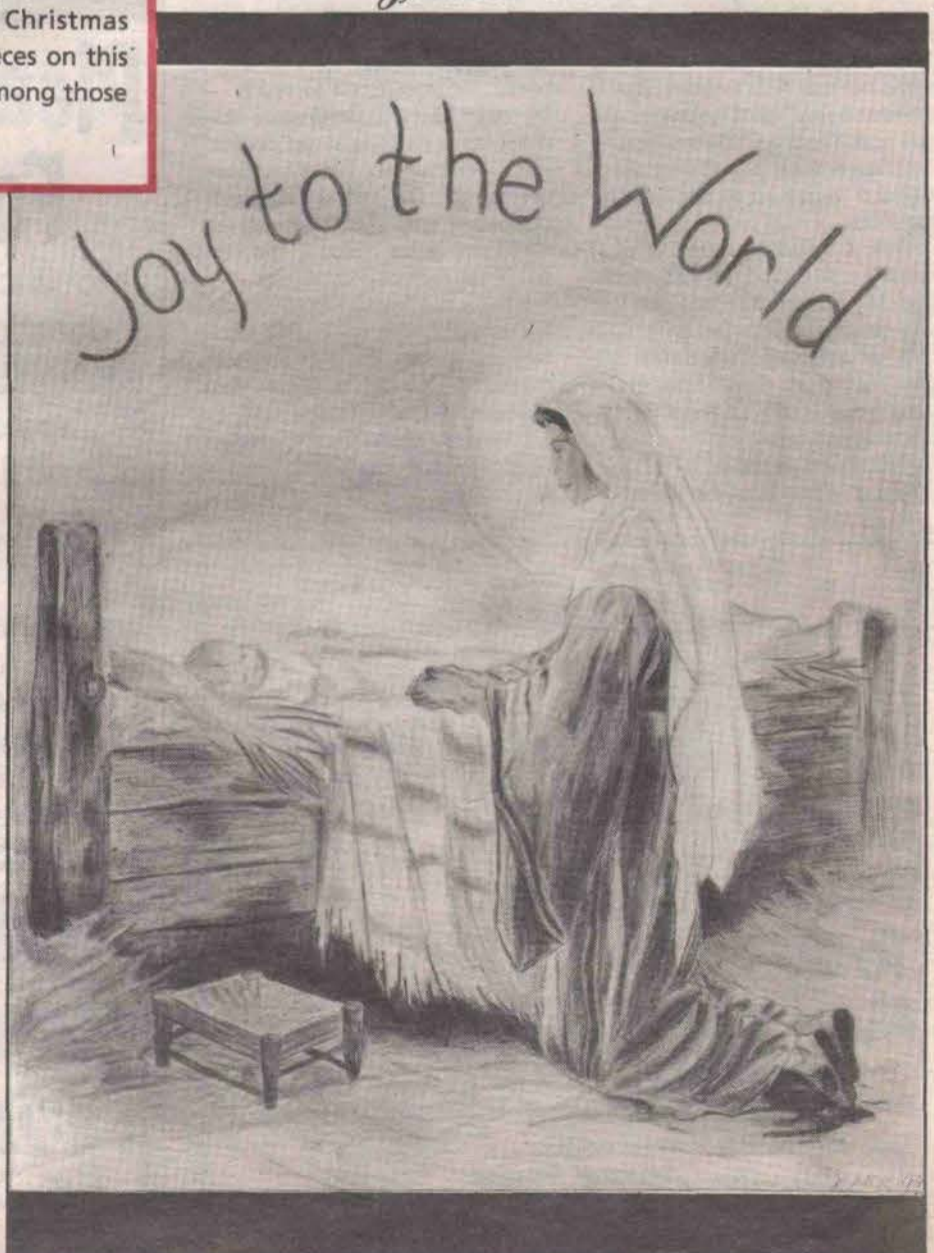


Joshua Clark

Once again, Gulf Islands Secondary School art students contributed cover art for Page A1 of this week's paper, the Driftwood's Christmas issue. The pieces on this page were among those submitted.



Gavin Cavanaugh



Krista McKeachie

The enduring Spirit of Christmas

Christmas miracle brings tree to life

Season spirit thrives even amid shift

By VALORIE LENNOX
Driftwood Staff

Christmas isn't Christmas without a tree — to paraphrase the opening line from Louisa May Alcott's Little Women.

I read a lot of Louisa May Alcott in those days. Dad thought the classic nineteenth century novels were good books for a nine-year-old to read. So I became acquainted with the March girls, living in the shadow of wealthier relatives and friends with their father away fighting in the American Civil War.

Like theirs, our family was incomplete. They were missing a father. We were missing a mother. We were also relatively poor, living in a basement suite in the rain-drenched coastal town of Prince Rupert.

But even at their poorest, the March girls had a Christmas tree. So my father's decree that we didn't need a tree verged on sacrilege.

It was one of those sensible adult decisions. After all, we would be spending Christmas day itself with grandma. Dad, a teacher at the local high school, had friends who were inviting us to pre-Christmas gatherings.

But I wanted our own tree, hung with ornaments and twinkling with lights. How could it be almost Christmas without a tree?

So I found a tree. On the last day of school before the holidays, the teacher let me take the small tree in the classroom home. With the tree came several lengths of construction paper chain, some of which I had glued together.

Arriving home, I propped up the tree. A few of the branches were broken from being dragged the three blocks from the school to my home but that didn't matter. It was green and smelled of wet wood and was undeniably a Christmas tree.

Draped with paper chains, it added a festive air to our tiny living room.

But, I had to admit, it still wasn't a full-fledged Christmas tree. My image of a Christmas tree was magical, glittering with light and shimmering with tinfoil icicles. My poor effort was green branches dotted with red and blue construction paper.

Still, it was the best I could do. A day or two later, I was search-



Valorie Lennox

ing for something — I no longer recall what — and decided to check the cupboards above my bed. Built up to the ceiling, they were high enough that I had to balance on a stool placed on the bed to reach the doors.

I'd never looked in those cupboards before. They were dark inside and empty, except for a lumpy heap coiled in the back corner. I reached in, seized what felt like a wire loop and pulled it out of the cupboard.

I held a string of Christmas lights.

Real, multi-coloured Christmas tree lights.

Lights which glowed when I plugged them in. Lights which transformed my little tree into a real Christmas tree, worthy of

the holiday season and worthy of the tiny Christmas miracle which had put those lights in that otherwise empty cupboard.

With age and experience, I now know there was nothing truly miraculous about it. The cupboards were difficult to reach — the most likely place to store seasonal items like Christmas decorations. No doubt the lights had been accidentally left behind by a previous tenant who hadn't noticed the wires and bulbs coiled in the corner of the dark cupboard.

That's the logical explanation. It's probably the truth. But miracles are so few that I'm reluctant to extinguish the magic of that moment with adult logic.

Everyone needs to experience at least one little miracle. Especially at Christmas.

Somehow, the spirit of Christmas endures.

Through poverty, war and work, we struggle to capture the magic of Christmas.

Some of us seek miracles; others look for colour on the bleakest of landscapes.

And sometimes, the magic of the season appears in the most unlikely places.

The stories that follow show how several islanders have strived under adverse circumstances to find spirit of Christmas.

One young child experiences a Christmas miracle.

People celebrate a religious holiday in communist regimes. One man recalls Christmas as a prisoner of war.

And through it all, the spirit endures.

Shift work doesn't dampen Christmas spirit at the Steele home.

Dovene Steele, who frequently works Christmas day as a dietary aide at Lady Minto Hospital, notes her family has developed a seasonal tradition for each December 25 that she works.

Steele usually works no more than four hours Christmas day, filling the 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. shift at the hospital.

Children Courtenay, 13, Casey, 11, and Jenny, 9, open their Christmas stockings early in the morning.

As Steele returns home from work, she is usually met by husband John and the children, who leave home shortly before 11 a.m. and walk down the road to meet her. Then the whole family returns home to open Christmas gifts.

Efforts are also made to create seasonal cheer at the hospital. Staff start baking Christmas treats early in December, so they can be served to patients and extended care residents during the week from December 25 to January 1.

Staff also decorate the room doors for extended care residents and often a wreath is hung on the door leading to the kitchen,

Steele said. A family dinner is arranged a week or so before Christmas for patients and their families.

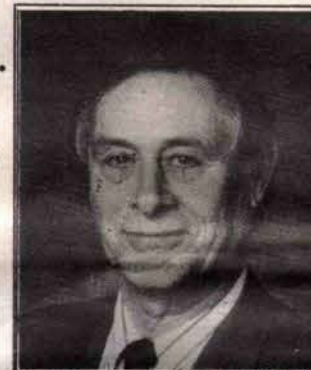
On Christmas day, patients are served a special breakfast with Danish pastries and eggnog. A traditional Christmas turkey dinner is served at lunch. In the afternoon, there is often caroling in the hospital.



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L-R: Surgeons Dr. G. Scott and Dr. T. Sira

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HO HO HO, CHINESE STYLE: Islanders Gus and Eileen Wttewaall were visited by Santa Claus several times during their two-year stay in China. The Chinese — Christians and non-Christians alike — have taken to the western wintry holiday customs with zeal.

Christmas celebrated in China where religion was proscribed

By GRAEME THOMPSON
Driftwood Staff

The spirit of Christmas is to be found alive and well in the most unlikely places. That is what islanders Gus and Eileen Wttewaall found during their two-year stint teaching English at a small college in central China.

Christmas cards, Santas and even turkey are not unheard of in a country which proscribed religion not many years ago under Mao Tse Tung's rule.

The Wttewaalls are retired school teachers. They are both members of the local United Church — Gus was a minister for years — and both are used to a snow-blanketed family Christmas.

For the last two years they were teaching English at the Jiangsu College of Finance in a village north of Shanghai and 200 km up the Yangtze River. Marco Polo and Mrs. Billy Graham were both past residents of Jiangsu. The Wttewaalls taught aspects of western culture as well as language, to give their students a better sense of the western world.

The Chinese have read a lot of western literature, Gus said, even if they cannot speak English well. They are excellent readers and writers and they have seen western television.

Their students asked them how they celebrated Christmas in Canada. By gathering the family together, eating special foods and having a gift exchange, Eileen told them. The gift exchange was something to which the Chinese could relate: they have gift exchange during their New Year celebrations in late January.

Partly because they are so generous by nature and partly because the college wanted to make sure the western teachers were happy in Jiangsu, the students put on a big Christmas party for the Wttewaalls.

A six-foot high evergreen which normally stood in its pot in the hall, was decorated with lights and ornaments. There was plenty of food, including the ubiquitous

Mandarin oranges. There were party games, and dancing and singing, Gus said. "It was a real western celebration."

The students also made little gifts for each other, small gifts, like boxes or small birds made out of paper. One student gave Eileen a bright necklace made out of bits of plastic.

This was not the only sign of Christmas in China. All the big hotels in the cities had Christmas trees in lobbies. There were also public light displays, such as a massive candle and sleigh on one building. Stores had Christmas trees, too, in pots, with lights.

Some stores even had Santas standing outside, Eileen said. They were there to advertise something, like a biscuit, which they handed out. Whenever they saw the Wttewaalls, they wished them "Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas."

Western culture has permeated the world, though they haven't got the background to understand it.

"Many of the students would say 'our grandmothers go to church' — meaning a Christian church," Gus said. "That is much like our own children."

"Western culture has permeated the world, even though they haven't got the background to understand it. One thing about Chinese Christmas, they are not bombarded quite so heavily by advertising."

"Here, there is advertising when you turn on the television and when you go into stores," Eileen said.

In China, authorities figure about one per cent of the population is Christian, Gus said. In 1949 there were fewer than one million Chinese Christians. Today there are anywhere between nine and 30 million.

And, today, Christianity has become a Chinese religion. It is no longer a religion belonging to foreign

missionaries. It is no longer controlled by outside forces. China has its own Christian theological colleges and its own Christian theologians.

But unlike the rest of the Christian world, China allows only two churches: Roman Catholic and Post-denominational, a sort of agglomeration of Protestants. In Nanking, the nearest large city to Jiangsu, there are some 3,000 people in the Protestant congregation, which requires several services per day to accommodate them all. At the Christmas and Easter baptismal services, they baptize between 100 and 150 people.

It was to this church in Nanking that the Wttewaalls went for Christmas services. All the westerners in the region gathered for services and dinner, sponsored by the electronics giant, Philips, which has a factory in Nanking.

Gus said services could vary in the church, according to different congregations, though often Christians of different churches would attend services together. The Christmas service was run by an Anglican priest but was "very similar to what we had at home."

There were 100 people — virtually all the westerners in the region — for the service. Afterwards there was a potluck Christmas dinner. Because the Wttewaalls had come from out of town, they did not have to bring a cooked dish. Many of those they met were teachers, some were business people, and some were doctors, learning different aspects of Chinese medicine.

The dinner was held in what was once an exclusive club but was now open to all. The food was fabulous, if varied, in the Salt Spring potluck tradition. There was everything from the traditional Canadian Christmas dinner: regular and sweet potatoes, plum pudding, even turkey. That had to come all the way from Hong Kong, Gus said, because China did not have turkeys as a rule.

Christmas, the Wttewaalls found, is very well kept in China.



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Christmas endures in POW camp

By VALORIE LENNOX
Driftwood Staff

Outside it was cold, ringed by barbed wire and watchtowers.

Inside, there was the warmth of eight bodies, a lightly fed wood stove and remembered Christmas carols.

"I'll be home for Christmas, you can count on me," the singers chorused. "I'll be home for Christmas ..."

"Like hell you will!" someone would always yell in response — and that would end the song.

In their dreams, the young men enclosed by the barbed wire of Stalag Luft 3 would be home.

"You always turn to thoughts of home," recalled Ivan Mouat, who spent the Christmases of 1943 and 1944 in the prisoner of war camp. He was 22 years old when he was shot down over Belgium on July 11, 1943.

Parachuting from the plane, he was captured almost immediately and sent to Stalag Luft 3.

"The thing I remember most about prison camp are the very dear friends that you have," he said. Bunked eight to a room, they generally ranged in age from 18 to 22.

Their room contained a table, a bench, a couple of chairs and four double-decker bunks. Each bunk was formed of boards covered with a pailasse, a large burlap bag filled with straw to make a mattress.

Cut off from family and friends, they formed a pseudo-family. And like all families, they celebrated Christmas.

They could visit other prisoners, sing carols together and maybe attend a play presented by the in-camp theatre group. There was no religious service — Mouat notes there was no padre in the camp.

Gifts from families were a possibility but unlikely. The prisoners were able to send and receive mail but messages and parcels were often delayed. Mouat estimates a gift would have to be sent from Canada in July to reach the camp in time for Christmas.

So the focus Christmas day was the "big bash." In the prison camp, food was a luxury, so they decided to celebrate with a huge meal — more food than they could possibly eat.

Planning began weeks ahead of time. To set aside food for the feast, they cut their own rations for the weeks before Christmas.

Their German captors gave them pearl barley, brown or black bread similar to a poor quality rye



BUCKET BRIGADE: Prisoners of war heft a barrel through the camp. The heavy coats hung on the barbed wire fence to air out were used during the night to supplement bedding.

bread and coffee or tea of dubious authenticity. Sometimes, there was kohlrabi, a type of cabbage with an edible, turnip-shaped stem.

The real wealth in food came from the Red Cross parcels, which arrived twice a week.

The eight men sharing the room received four parcels on Monday and four on Thursday. There were three different types of parcels — one from the Canadian Red Cross, one from the British and one from the American Red Cross. Each had different contents.

"We much preferred the Canadian parcel," Mouat recalled. In a package measuring two feet by 16 inches by six inches deep, the Canadian Red Cross included a can of powdered milk known as klim, a can of corned beef, a can of salmon, a can of sardines, a pound of butter, pilot bread biscuits, real tea or coffee, a small tin of marmalade or jam and a piece of dried cheese. There was also a pound of sugar, a package of prunes or raisins and a slab of milk chocolate equal to the large bars which sold in Canada for 15 cents.

The U.S. parcel included D-rations, cigarettes and chocolate while the British Red Cross send dried apples or apricots, condensed milk, tinned meat and vegetables.

From this collection, the eight men would devise a menu for

PRISONER B5

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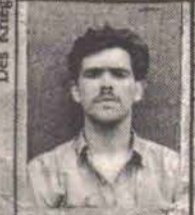
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PRISON RECORD:

This card from prisoner of war camp Stalag Luft 3 included a photograph of Ivan Mouat, taken shortly after he was shot down over Belgium on July 11, 1943. A notation on the back of the card records the 10 days Mouat spent in the "cooler" for participating in digging an escape tunnel.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25	
Personalkarte I: Personelle Angaben	
Kriegsgefangenen-Stammnummer: Stalag Luft 3	
Beschreibung der Kriegsgefangenenkarte: <i>4493</i>	
Nr. <i>4493</i>	
Lager: Stalag Luft 3	
Name: <i>Mouat</i>	Staatsangehörigkeit: <i>Kanada</i>
Vorname: <i>William Ivan</i>	Dienstgrad: <i>P/O F10</i>
Geburtsdatum und -ort: <i>16.7.20 Ganges B.C.</i>	Truppenteil: <i>RCAP Kom. usw.</i>
Religion: <i>Prot.</i>	Zivilberuf: <i>Student Berufs-Gr.</i>
Vorname des Vaters:	Matrikel Nr. (Stammnummer der Heilmittelkarte): <i>J 17 084</i>
Familienname der Mutter:	Gefangennahme (Ort und Datum): <i>Buffalo 11.7.43</i>
Lichtbild	Ob gesund, krank, verwundet eingeliefert:
	Ohne Personalbeschreibung
Größe: <i>1.78</i>	Hautfarbe: <i>braun</i>
Haarfarbe: <i>braun</i>	Behaarung/Kennzeichen: <i>Wurde am 28. u. 11. Dezember</i>
Augenfarbe: <i>blau</i>	Arbeitsnummer: <i>W.M. Mouat</i>
Blutgruppe: <i>B.C.</i>	Ort: <i>Ganges</i>
Land: <i>Canada</i>	

PRISONER:

From Page B4

Christmas day. Outlandish ideas would be tossed out, like trying to create a plum pudding with the prunes and raisins in the Canadian package.

"We'd decide on some sort of pie," Mouat said. The dried apples in the British Red Cross parcel were used for the filling and the pastry was made of ground up pilot bread biscuits mixed with klim and butter.

Turkey was out of the question but the group could have a hearty stew. Corned beef from the Canadian packages, canned meat and vegetables from the British package and the pearl barley from the Germans all went into the stew.

"We wanted lots to eat," Mouat remarked. Another limiting factor were the cooking facilities. They only had the top of a shared stove and large pots. There was no access to an oven.

To create their Christmas apple pie, they warmed the filling in the pot and cooked the crust on top of the stove, pouring the filling into the crust before serving. They also devised a type of ice cream from sugar, condensed milk and klim, setting it outside to freeze.

One year they created a Christmas cake which included the raisins and prunes, icing made from sugar and butter. Mouat still recalls the top decorated with the words "Merry Christmas."

The resulting feast was the highlight of Christmas Day. "We were often short of food. But, by golly, we were going to have lots of food on Christmas day."

Invariably, Mouat said, the men's shrunken stomachs couldn't handle the feast and they'd spend the rest of the day recovering from the shock of so much food. The skimping on their normal rations to save for the feast only intensified the problem.

"Your stomach does shrink," he reported. However, he pointed out, the food could only be saved in the few weeks leading to Christmas. Before distributing the parcels, the Germans punctured all the tins so the food would spoil sooner.

Before distributing the parcels, the Germans punctured the tins so the food would spoil sooner.

Since a minimum of Grade 12 graduation was required for service in the Air Force, many of the captured air force prisoners were highly educated and able to improvise with almost nothing.

One of the favourite improvisations was a brewing tank. Brew could be made from the raisins and/or prunes, mixed with sugar and a little scrounged yeast, and stored in a sauerkraut barrel to ripen.

"You could smell it a mile away," Mouat recalled. Often some of the brew was flowing Christmas day, leading to a less-than-joyous Boxing Day. "You got terrible hangovers."

Mouat's group once tried brewing its own batch. Unfortunately,

three days after the process started, the senior British officer in the camp banned booze.

Those in the group conferred among themselves and agreed that their commanding officer would understand that they had to complete and consume their project. Accordingly, they finished the batch and held what they planned as a quiet party — which quickly turned into a rip-roaring drunk enlivened by party crashers from other rooms.

Early the next morning, hung-over and unhappy, Mouat and company were hauled before their group captain. Reminding the group that homemade hooch was forbidden, he imposed the worst possible punishment by breaking up the group.

Each was ordered to find a different room. It took a move to a different section of the camp and some months of trading rooms before most of the original group was able to reassemble, Mouat recalled.

Many of them were still together when they were finally released by advancing Russian troops on April 27, 1945.

By the next Christmas, Mouat was back home on Salt Spring Island.

Although life in Stalag Luft 3 was difficult, Mouat describes himself as fortunate. He survived the war and he survived the camp, which was less onerous than the imprisonment experienced by some other troops.


It is unlikely Mouat will ever forget those Christmases spent in Stalag Luft 3.

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Santa is Grandpa in Russia

By GRAEME THOMPSON
Driftwood Staff

Christmas comes but once a year. But not always on the same day. In Russia, for instance, Christmas is celebrated January 7.

In Russia — where the October Revolution has always been celebrated November 7 — the Julian calendar is still being used. The fixing of annual festivals was changed in the west by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582 to align major festivals with the seasons again. The Julian calendar is 13 days behind the Gregorian, which puts Christmas in Russia on January 7.

But until recently, Russians did not celebrate Christmas at all. Russia has been a secular state since the 1917 revolution. It is an atheist state, a state in which God plays no part. So Russians turned the Christmas tree into a New Year's tree; Santa Claus became the New Year's Grandpa.

"Instead of religious holidays we have revolutionary holidays," Irina Drobysheva said. "The only real holiday is New Year's Eve, when they forget about worries in the hope that the next year will be better than the one before."

Drobysheva came to North America some three years ago and has been living with her eight-year-old son Vassa on Salt Spring Island. A translator of German by profession, she told the Driftwood last week how Christmas was celebrated in Russia today.

Families gather together at their parents homes. They exchange presents. They eat special dishes. In this respect, the Christmas celebrations are the same in Russia as in the west.

Every Russian child writes to New Year's Grandpa, who comes the night of December 31. They write nice letters and ask for toys. New Year's Grandpa wears a long red robe and hat, has a long white beard and carries a heavy sackful of presents.

At home, people decorate apartments and have their own New Year's trees. Children make decorations in the schools and each class has a New Year's party and is visited by New Year Grandpa, who distributes presents. There is even a phone-in Grandpa service, for parents who want a special visit January 1.

Streets and buildings are decorated with lights. Stores have large New Year's trees lit up and are visited by New Year's Grandpas, much like the west's own depart-

ment store Santas. At theatres in Moscow, New Year's Grandpa turns up to greet children and give them presents.

Drobysheva remembered her grandmother always served roast duck on Christmas day with baked apples and all sorts of tasty treats. Turkey was common in Russia at Christmas as were traditional pirogis filled with meat, fish or cabbage.

"Cabbage pirogis are very popular," she said.

Three years ago, Drobysheva had a taste of what Christmases in Russia were like before the revolution. She visited her grand-aunt in San Francisco, who had left Russia as a young woman in 1919.

"I went to see people who were children and grand-children of people who left Russia then," Drobysheva said of the American Russians she met. "All the traditions and customs and the ways of living (in old Russia), they were keeping there."

Russians turned the Christmas tree into a New Year's tree.

"All the houses I saw were real Russian houses. They had icons in them — long banished in the home country."

There were three or four Orthodox church-fulls of Russians in San Francisco, she said. They all spoke Russian without an accent, though most had not even been born in Russia. And they spoke about Americans as if they were speaking about foreigners.

In America, Russians celebrate Christmas like everyone else under the Gregorian date of December 25. Her grandmother, like her grand-aunt, was brought up with the old traditions. Her cousins in the new world were too. Her parents, in Russia, were not.

"My parents were not God-believers," Drobysheva said. "Most children in Russia were not baptized at all for a period of 70 years."

At school children were taught atheism. In the young communist organizations, they were taught atheism. Even at university, there were compulsory courses in old religion and atheism. Those years of atheism are making it difficult to switch suddenly to a belief in Christ. But Russians are doing just that. They are flocking back to the Church, which is the nascent Russian Orthodox Church.

"Many people have gone back to church," Drobysheva said. "They have hope. They pray for help."

"It happened naturally. People who came back to the church, they found they had missed a lot. Children who were brought up with the church were brought up with a sense of justice. They are more sensitive than children without that."

And the churches are making a special effort for children. Sunday schools are open and filling up, Drobysheva said. Almost every church has a children's choir.

There are still some aspects of the new, old religion which seem strange to Drobysheva. For one, priests in the Orthodox Church hold services in Church Slavonic, which stopped being spoken some time in the seventeenth century and is more closely related to Bulgarian than modern Russian.

Drobysheva said the Russian church may be a home for everyone when the priest speaks an understandable language, but "this is not yet the case." Another aspect of the old church revival which is difficult is to understand the physical aspect of the church: the rich vestments; the icons; the altarpieces. These are symbols of the church which have to be relearned after 70 years.

This Christmas, on Salt Spring, Drobysheva and her son, Vassa, have a Christmas tree. They have decorated the house where they are staying and bought presents for those around them. Drobysheva is preparing Russian treats.

And, for Drobysheva and her son, Christmas will come twice this year. They will celebrate like everyone else on Salt Spring, December 25. But Vassa, will be waiting for New Year's Grandpa to visit January 31.

SALT SPRING DAIRY SERVICE

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Good Wishes Through
December 25th ...and well beyond!

Happy Holidays!
Beth, Brian, Bill and Larry

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

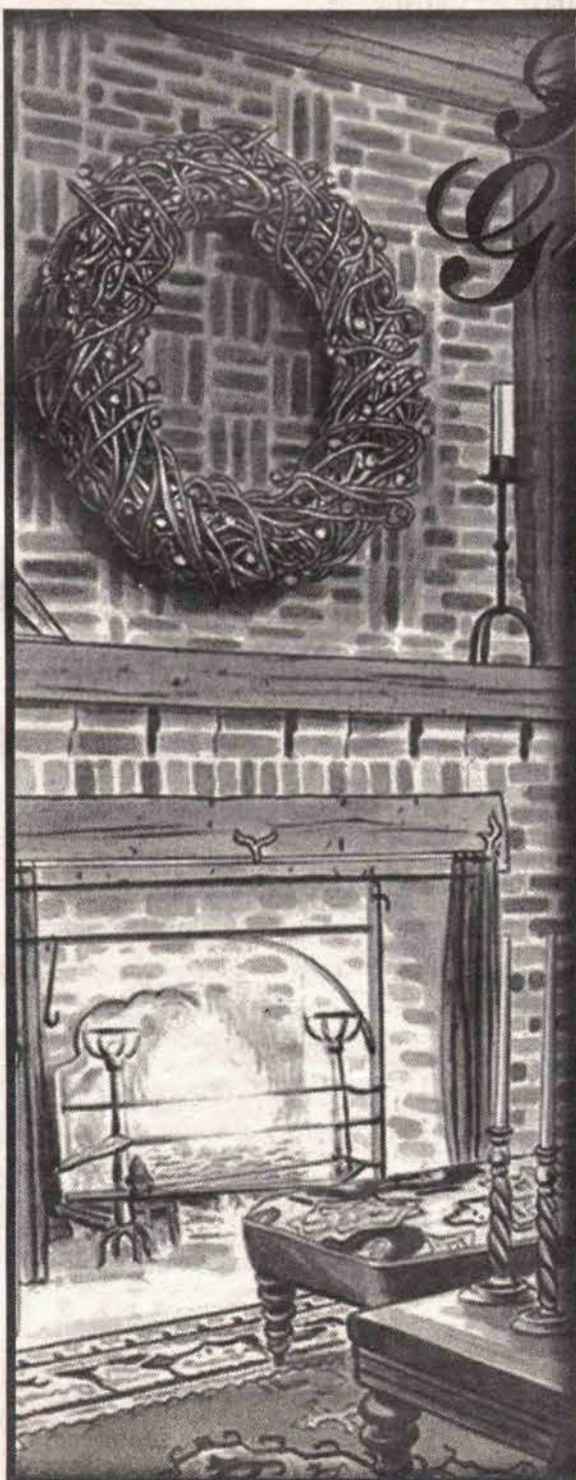
To all we wish a Christmas filled with laughter, friends and loving family.

Donna, Del, Kelly & Amber Regen

Merry Christmas
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Season's Greetings

The spirit of the season is in the air and the hearts of people everywhere—

A small child's eyes, shining bright.
A Christmas tree, colouring the night.

Friends and family come together, bringing a warmth to the chilly weather.

May your holidays be filled with love and cheer—

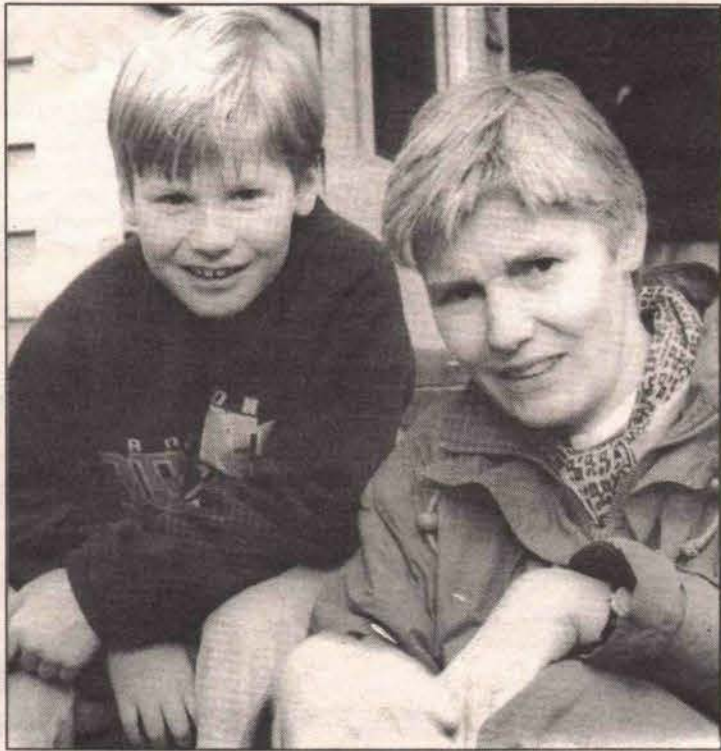
Merry Christmas to all and a Happy New Year!

From all of us at



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Ready for Christmas

Salt Spring Islanders eight-year-old Vassa Drobyshev, left, and his mother, Irina Drobysheva, are getting ready for Christmas. In Russia, where they lived until three years ago, Christmas was not a religious celebration and it was celebrated two weeks later, on January 7.

Photo by Graeme Thompson

Season's Greetings

EILEEN LARSEN
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Century 21
Islands Realty Ltd.

A Christmas Wish

May your heart be filled with love during this holiday season.

Best wishes for a joyous new year!

from
Charlie & Joan Buckley

Christmas ban tried

By VALORIE LENNOX
Driftwood Staff

Even the government couldn't outlaw Christmas.

In 1644, the puritanical government of Oliver Cromwell tried to ban the celebration by an act of Parliament — an act which proved difficult to enforce.

Reminders were necessary. One proclamation issued from Westminster on December 24, 1652 — eight years after the initial ban — tells Englishmen that markets are to be kept open and that no one is to molest those shopkeepers who opened for business. Obviously, some who disagreed with the ban took out their ire on those who worked Christmas Day.

One surviving piece from the controversy is a 1652 book entitled, *Thesis: The Birthday of our Saviour Jesus Christ*, the 25th of December, ought yearly to be kept holy by all Christians.

Under the name of "Pastor Fido (Faithful)" and from a location which he described as "From the Valley Exile, in the Land of Nod, near the Cape of Good Hope," the author anonymously defended the celebration of Christmas.

"My task must be to confute them that do deny that the twenty-fifth day of December, the day whereon our Saviour Christ came into the world, is to be kept holy," he wrote. "Peter, the apostle's chief and Christ's companion, did prophecy that in the later days there should come false cheaters: the word I confess in our translation is teachers, but we may read either for they are both one; the one word doth anagrammatize the other, and both words and deeds

do prove them to be the same in these days, when cheaters turn teachers and teachers cheaters, cheating Christ of his glory."

The angels celebrated Christ's birth at the command of the Lord, notes Pastor Fido, yet the teacher-cheaters of his time order that Christmas should not be celebrated. To him, this was typical of the arrogance of the time, which overturned traditions in government and in religion.

For those who might shy away from Christmas because the "mas" in the name of the celebration suggested the mass of the Roman Catholic church, Pastor Fido had a different explanation.

"The birthday of our Lord, we call it Christmas or Christ's Messe, not from the Popish Masse said thereupon, but from our ancient word Messe, which signifies a feast."

He accurately predicted that the ban on Christmas would not last: the restoration of Charles II in 1660 as king of England was quickly followed by the restoration of Christmas.

According to Pastor Fido, Englishmen were ready to fight for their plum pudding and Yule logs. He wrote:

"Old Fathers thirty nine, lo,
Christmas keep with me,
And hundred thousands more,
Of brave young Gallantry,

Most zealous sparks they are,
they'll keep it every year,
For Christ and for his day,
they'll spend their blood so dear.

Let's hear what they can say,
they for themselves shall speak,
Their words they will make way
while others are to seek."

Merry Christmas!



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Merry Christmas to all and to all a great day!

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A HAPPY, HEALTHY NEW YEAR

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Christmas through young eyes

Driftwood story contest winners

Christmas Surprise

By NOVA CHAMBERLIN
Age 11, first place

The sound of footsteps, crunching through the snow, and the smell of roasting chestnuts filled the air. Hundreds of people were all bustling through the streets. If you looked closely, you might have seen a girl, about 12, wearing tattered, ragged clothes, and carrying a woven basket. A shy expression was on her cool smudged face. Her name was Becky.

She would not go home to a warm fire, Christmas cookies and hot chocolate, as all the other people would. Becky had no real home. She would find only dirty dishes and grates to be cleaned. Becky was a scullery maid. Though she was maid to one of the richest families in the village, she had only a small attic room. After a hard days work, weary and exhausted, she had barely enough strength to climb up the long stair to her room.

She woke the next morning to the cold grey light sleeping through the small window. She looked out. A thick grey fog loomed over the houses and in the street. She shivered and pulled her ragged shirt more tightly around her. It was time to start work. She pinned a thin wool shawl around her shoulders, and went downstairs.

"Becky! Becky!" Mrs. Warnford called. "Clean my daughter's room at once! Where have you been?"

"I'm sorry Ma'm," Becky said. "I

must have slept in. I start my duties at once." She hurried up two flights of stairs to the room. "Begging your pardon, Miss Alice," Becky said, shyly, dropping a timid curtsy. "The mistress says I'm to clean your room."

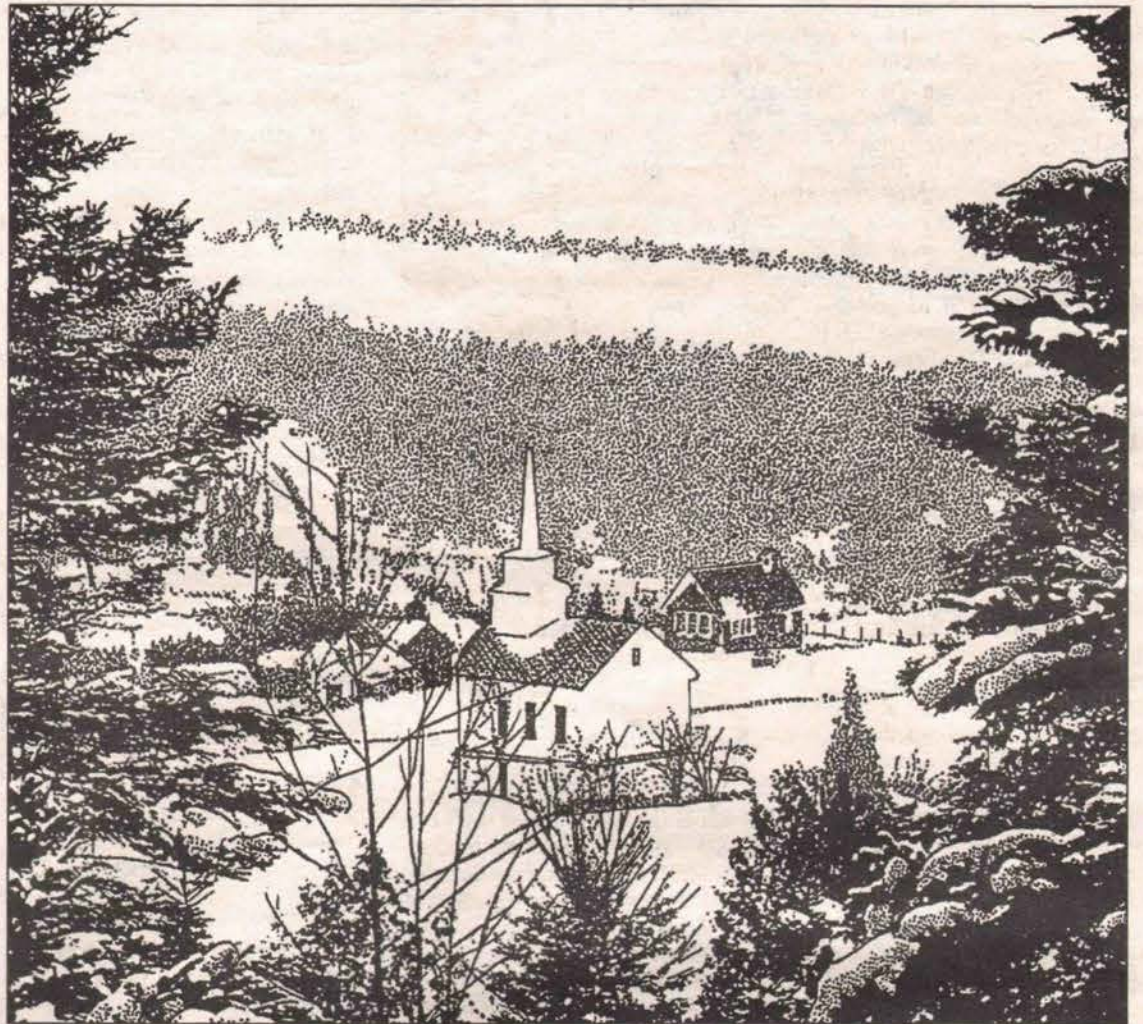
"Alright Becky, I'll move my dolls to my bed so you can dust the table," Alice said kindly. Becky couldn't believe her ears, kind words, from someone so grand and splendid. She finished, and bobbed a shy curtsy.

"I'll be going now Miss Alice," she said, and left.

Days passed, and soon it was Christmas Eve. Becky was lonely, and had no Christmas tree, no gaily wrapped packages. There was sitting on her bed, when there was a tapping on the door. Alice came in. "Would you like to come to my room and have cookies and cocoa?" she asked.

"Oh no, Miss Alice!" Becky gasped. "The master and mistress would never allow it!" "Mother and father have gone out, and won't be back until late," Alice assured her. "Come on, I'm lonely, just sitting in my room, all alone."

And before Becky could protest, she was swept away, through the carpeted halls, past the rich tapestries, until they came to Alice's room. There they sat in comfortable chairs by a crackling fire, sipping hot cocoa, and nibbling Christmas cookies. And so it turned out to be a happy Christmas for Becky and Alice, sharing it with a friend.



Season's Greetings!



One of the real joys of the holiday season is the opportunity to say "Thank You" to all of our customers. As in the past our customer's have made it possible for Windsor Plywood to support many community organizations and events during the year.

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Happy Holidays

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The Talking Christmas Stocking

By MELANIE CALLAS
Age 9, second place

Once there was an Old Woman who lived in an old house. The Old Woman was very happy in the old cozy house, except she was a little lonely. One day when she went to sit in her old creaky rocking chair by the fireplace, with her soft and cuddly tabby cat, she noticed that it was SNOWING OUTSIDE!

Oh my goodness the old woman shrieked. The Old Woman rushed over to her calendar and then she said, OH NO! I forgot that it's December the 19th! The Old Woman got her coat and hurried out the door. When she got to her car the Old Woman hopped in and drove away.

When the Old Woman got to the store where some people were selling Christmas trees, she got out of her car and raced over to a man that was selling the trees. She asked if they had any Christmas trees that were 10 feet tall. The man said yes and led the Old Woman over to the section of the 10-foot tall trees. The Old Woman looked at all the trees very carefully. Then the Old Woman finally found the perfect tree and went over to the young man and paid.

When the tree was loaded up in her car, the Old Woman drove

over to the Christmas Shop and went in. She looked around and then something caught the Old Woman's eye. It was a red and green Christmas stocking. The Old Woman rushed over to it and examined the stocking carefully. The stocking looked unusual in some way, but the Old Woman bought the Christmas stocking anyway.

When the Old Woman got home she hung the stocking up by the fireplace. The stocking looked neat hung up by the fire-



place. After the Old Woman ate a dinner of chicken, mashed potatoes with gravy and squash, she sat down by the fireplace and took a nap. When the Old Woman woke up it was 1:00 in the morning so she went to bed. The next time she woke up it was 6:30 a.m. so the Old Woman got up and put the coffee on.

When she finished eating, the Old Woman turned on some Christmas music and sat down. A few minutes later she heard an unusual sound in the living room, so the Old

Woman went into the living room to see what it was. But when the Old Woman got to where she heard the sound, she couldn't believe where the sound had come from. It came from the Old Woman's new STOCKING! The Old Woman screamed AHHHHH!

When she settled down, the Old Woman asked the stocking some questions like, What's your name? Where did you come from? Does anybody know you can talk? Do you have a family? and many more.

The Old Woman and the stocking had a wonderful time together. When Christmas finally came, the Old Woman and her new friend, the stocking, opened presents together. They had a WONDERFUL time and the Old Woman was not lonely anymore!

MERRY CHRISTMAS
and a
HAPPY NEW YEAR
to all my
friends on
Salt Spring
Island
MRS. AUDREY J.
BUITENWERF
and family

Christmas in the jungle

By KIRBY GARSIDE
Age 5, first place

(Once upon a time) there was a little boy named Colin who was lonely in the jungle. He never found any animals he just walked and walked and walked. It was getting close to Christmas. Colin decided never to walk again so he fell asleep for a long time and nothing happened.

In another part of the jungle, Jason the Giraffe was lost. Jason wished for a friend. And then the next day, Jason found a zebra, a monkey, a lion, an elephant, and a parrot named Kirby who wanted a perch to stand on for Christmas. They were celebrating Christmas. They had a cake with leaves and grass on it and hot drinks in a turtle shell.

The next day Santa Polar Bear was coming to the jungle. The animals asked the Giraffe to be their Christmas tree so that Santa could find them. Jason said "yes" so the animals decorated him with berries and bananas. The next morning Colin wakes up and sees the Giraffe dressed like a Christmas tree. Colin finds the animals and Santa Polar Bear. Colin was happy, happy, happy. They all played hide-and-seek and thought Christmas was special.

And a Merry Christmas to all of you.

Season's Greetings
Thank you for putting your trust in us.
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Christmas essay winners can pick up their prizes at Driftwood's office - 328 Lower Ganges Rd. (please note we will be closed Dec. 23 & 26)

strike up some cheer!
Here's hoping that your Christmas season is right up your alley!
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TREAT YOURSELF TO THE TREASURES OF CHRISTMAS AND ENJOY A GLORIOUS NEW YEAR!

As we approach the beginning of another year, Our thoughts turn thankfully to those whose courtesy, good will and loyalty have helped make our progress possible.

LEE THE PLUMBER

By ROSE ATKINS
Age 12, second place

Once upon a Christmastime, up at the north pole, there lived a tiny weeny elf. The other elves, being all of three feet tall, towered above him. But this little elf, whose name was Jeremy, commonly known as Little J, was only three inches tall.

You might think that Little J would have been teased. But because of his small size he was a great help to the elves when they were making tiny toys, with tiny parts that needed delicate workmanship.

One day, three days before Christmas, the elves were packing Santa's sleigh high with presents, and the reindeer were polishing up their flying skills. Little J, too small to help, was watching. He started to elf dream about going with Santa on his trip delivering presents. That was something that no elf had ever done before, and Little J decided that he would be the first. He began to plan.

"First," he thought, "I will sneak into one of Santa's sacks and then hide until he opens it and finds me. Then I will help him deliver the presents."

Little J was so excited that he almost didn't hear Comet walk up behind him.

"Hi!" Little J yelled up to Comet, who hadn't noticed him sitting, almost hidden, under a tiny pine tree. "Oh hi there Little J. How are you these days?" asked the big reindeer, looking down at the tiny elf in his little red suit.

"Fine, how about you?" Little J asked, trying to climb up the small tree to get up to the reindeer's height. Comet lifted Little J with his nose onto a branch, then lay down in the snow to talk. Comet and Little J were good friends and told each other everything. Little J told Comet about his plan and Comet gave him an idea.

"Why not hide behind one of my bells, then at one of the stops you can run back to Donner. From there, run to Santa's sleigh."

"Comet, you're a genius!" Little J shrieked with joy, jumping up and down and almost falling off the tree.

The next day was Christmas Eve. The elves had finished loading up the sleigh, and Santa was making himself snacks for the ride. Little J, with the help of Comet and Donner (who was also in on the little elf's scheme), was practicing running from reindeer to reindeer. It was not easy. First he had to run along Comet's back, then onto Donner's nose and along his back, then along the toughest part . . . walking along the thin leather of Donner's harness and into the sleigh. Little J did it over and over until he could do it as quick as a wink.

Little J's Christmas

Finally the time came. The elves helped the reindeer put their harnesses on, not even suspecting that there was a stowaway on Comet's collar. Santa kissed his wife goodbye and got into his sleigh. Little J held on for dear life as the reindeer ran along the snow and flew up into the air. He sat behind one of Comet's bells and waited. Thump, thump, thump, the sleigh landed on the roof. This was the time. Little J was so nervous that he almost forgot what he had to do.

Then Comet said "Go!", and Little J ran along his back and onto Donner's nose. "Phew," he said, and sat on one of Donner's antlers as they took off again. For the first time Little J looked down. "Wow," he exclaimed. This was the most beautiful thing he had ever seen. It was not too dark to see, and the world was covered with snow. The houses were just little white lumps with colourful Christmas lights around them.

Then thump, thump, thump, the sleigh landed again. Santa leapt out and was down the chimney in a flash. It was now time for the most dangerous part of Little J's plan. He ran down Donner's neck, along his back, and onto the strap that was attached to the sleigh. Then he made a mad dash along it and clambered up onto the sleigh.

"I made it!" he said to anyone who was listening. "I can't believe it. I made it!" Little J was doing a victory dance, when poof, Santa popped out of the chimney. He hopped into the sleigh and started up the team.

"Hello?" said Little J uncertainly. Santa looked around and . . . not seeing anyone, hit his ear with his gloved hand and shook his head.

"Uh, down there!" Little J said, waving his arms from his perch on the front of the sleigh.

Santa looked down in surprise, "Little J?"

"Uh, yeah," Little J said. "What on earth are you doing here?" Santa asked, amazed. "I thought I checked the sleigh before I left."

"Well," answered Little J, "I hid on Comet's collar and then ran along his back. Donner put his nose down and I hopped on."

"Wait a minute," Santa interrupted. "Were Donner and Comet in on your plan too?"

"Um, yeah," said Little J, not wanting to get his friends in trouble, but not being able to lie to Santa.

"It's amazing you didn't fall," Santa said in awe of the tiny, brave elf.

"I practiced a lot," Little J admitted, "because I really wanted to come with you."

"You are a smart little elf," Santa said admiringly, "And I was thinking of getting a partner. Someone of your size could help me when the doors are locked and the chimneys are too small for me to go down. It seems a shame to have to use my Christmas magic on little things like that."

"Holy Crow!" Little J shouted, "Wow and double wow!" He was ecstatic. It was like Santa had read his mind!

Santa laughed, "Well, you may as well start tonight; we'll do this house first."

Down, down they flew and thump, thump, thump, they landed on the roof. "All right, hop onto my shoulder," Santa told Little J, "And we'll go in." There was no chimney on this house, so Santa flew to the door. He tried to pen it, but it was locked.

"O.K.," he said, "Get going." He magically flew little J down to the doormat. Little J wriggled underneath the door and stood up. He looked around him. Everything was HUGE!

"I'm waiting," Santa called. Then Little J realized that he had no way to reach the doorknob. Up at the north pole, there was always a special string for him to pull that would open the door.

"Santa," he called, "I can't reach the doorknob!" A sprinkle of Santa's magic sparkling dust danced under the door and powdered Little J.

"Now think about flying," Santa called out to him. Little J thought about flying up to the doorknob and was surprised to find himself actually flying. "Neato!" he exclaimed. He flew up to the doorknob. He was even more surprised to find that he could easily turn it. He unlatched the lock and opened the door.

"Thanks," said Santa, entering the room. "Ah, let's see now, who lives here?" He looked at his list. "Fred and Jessica Brown," he read. Santa placed the presents under the tree, filled up the stockings and called to Little J, "Lock the door after me, and I'll meet you at the sleigh!"

"All right!" Little J said, happily. He still could not really believe that he was Santa's helper on the sleigh ride. Little J locked the door and flew under it.

"Woah," he thought to himself, "That was fast!"

For the rest of the night, the more doors Little J opened, the quicker he got. By the end of the night, he was as quick as a flash, just like Santa.

At last Santa said, "This is the last one." Little J groaned in dis-

appointment. "Well," Santa reminded him, "There's always next year, and the year after, and the year after that!"

"You mean I can come with you again next year?" asked the happy little elf.

"Why of course you can Little J. I don't know why I didn't think of it before!"

And that's how Little J became the first real Christmas elf.



Season's Greetings

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We wish you a happy and healthy
New Year.



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CHRISTMAS MAGIC: A shaft of sunlight illuminates a Christmas tree and six-year-old Erin Beddoes, who carefully examines the handmade ornaments on the branches.

Photo by Valerie Lennox

Christmas dream

By NICHOLAS WATKINS

Age 7, second place

When I was sleeping on Christmas Eve, I dreamed that baby Jesus was lying in a crib with the stars watching over him and the lambs licking his cheek.

I woke up that very minute and thought how nice that Santa Claus would like my dream.

I think in my dream God was watching over me and Saint Nick too.
The End



Best wishes to our many friends and clients for a joyful holiday season.



Back L-R Terry, Shelagh, Susan, Betti
Front L-R Lynn, Joyce

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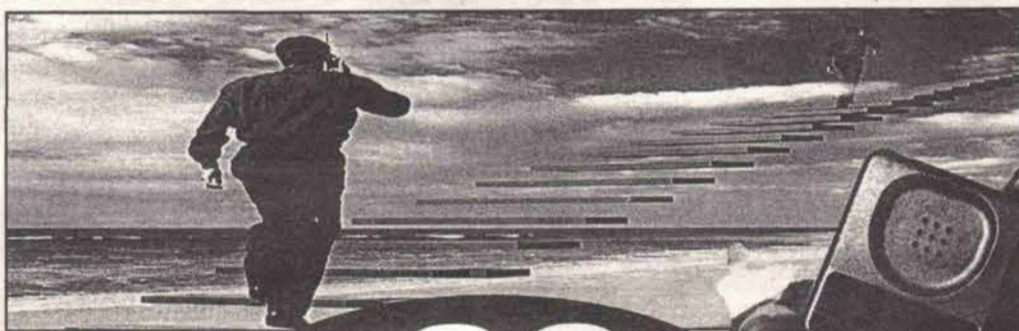


et cetera
(et cetera!)

dawn, kirsten, kris, elizabeth, susan, carolyn, gary, opal, tara

Please Note: The Driftwood office will be closed
Friday, Dec. 23 and Monday, Dec. 26

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By PATRICK McCULLY

Age 12, first place winner

It was very busy at the North Pole and at the Santa Resort, there had just been a large snowfall and Santa's sleigh was stuck in the snow. Santa, the elves and all the reindeer were pushing and pulling the sleigh, but it just wouldn't move.

Suddenly, after much heaving and more pushing, the sleigh bolted forward, the result being that the elves made a faceplant in the snow and Santa lay upside down with a dazed look in his eyes.

All the elves gathered around Santa and one of them bent down and poked Santa and said, "You okay there big guy?"

"Duoi" spluttered Santa.

"He must have hit his head," said another elf. "We'd better pick him up and take him inside." The elves bent down and lifted Santa saying as they struggled to hoist him off the ground, "Boy, he'd better cut down on some of that eggnog."

They bring Santa into his living room and sit him down in his big, red reclining chair.

"He should be okay there for now" they agreed, and then they went back to the toy shop to work.

Santa's eyes slowly open, he looks around the room and feels misplaced, so he stands up and takes a walk around. He walks over to the door, kneels down and looks through the keyhole and he sees a bunch of little men wearing green pointed hats with bells and curly tipped shoes. He is slightly frightened by them and then he walks over to a large front window, lifts the latch and wonders if he should jump out or not.

It's only about three feet down so he takes a giant step off the window ledge and lands flat on his butt. He stands up, brushes himself off and begins to walk towards what looks like a small town. He finally reaches the outskirts of a town where he sees a large, silvery thing with wings. He doesn't remember seeing anything like this before, so he strolls over to it and takes a good, hard look at it, walks around the back of it, where he sees a conveyor belt with suitcases going into the belly of this thing.

The Christmas Santa almost forgot

This looks like this might be fun, he thinks to himself and climbs inside with the luggage. All of a sudden, the cargo doors close, the engines start up and the plane starts to taxi down the runway for take-off. He sits in the luggage compartment for what seems like hours and finally dozes off to sleep.

He is awakened by the sudden screech of the tires hitting the run-

"You're lucky you have a job, even it will be over in a few days."

"What do you mean?" asks Santa.

"Well you're the Santa Claus down at the Sears store, aren't ya, but what's your real name?"

Santa suddenly realizes his name is Kristopher Kringle, and his home is at the North Pole and it will soon be Christmas Eve!

How did he get here? He must get home soon, get to a telephone, call Mrs. Claus and ask her to send the sleigh and Rudolph to come as soon as possible and take him home.

Santa knows there is not enough time to figure out how he got there or what is going on, but he does recognize the poor people around him as some of the children he once brought toys to long ago. Why is it they are now without homes and love of their families? Santa will ponder this problem during his trip back to the North Pole.

Santa arrives back home to a crowd of cheering elves and helpers, who are so relieved to see him and want him to explain what happened and where he had been.

Santa says, "No time to explain, we have lots of work to do and we are running late." During Santa's trip home he realized that there had to be a reason why he found himself among those lonely and lost people back in the city. He began to understand what they needed more than anything. With that he cheered, his eyes lit up and cheeks began to shine, he smiled a broad smile and everyone began to sing the songs of joy at Christmas.

That Christmas Eve he made a special visit to the homeless shelters around the world.

As Eddy and his friends awoke on Christmas Morning, it wasn't just another day as they had expected. There was something very different about this day and about each other. They all smiled and



way. When the plane comes to a complete stop and the luggage compartment doors opens, he makes a break for it and wanders into a very poor part of a large city. By this time, he is lost, cold, hungry and confused. Looking around, he notices a long line-up of people in front of a dirty, rundown building, so he follows the line-up of people into the building, where at last he is handed a bowl of soup and a sandwich and is asked, "What are you doing all dressed up like Santa Claus, working for the Salvation Army or the Bay?"

He takes his bowl of soup and his sandwich, sits down at one of the long tables that isn't too crowded and eats hungrily.

"What's your name man," a voice says to him.

Santa looks around at a rather tall, thin man, with a half bald head and a scraggly beard. His clothes are ragged and dirty and he looks lonely and kind of said. "My name's Eddy," the man says.

City Council."

Another one said, "I'll go and ask the Mayor if the city will let us renovate the old building so we can live in it."

Soon everyone at the shelter discovered that they woke up with feelings of hope, confidence and a renewed spirit of faith in that together all things are possible.

And that's what we should all feel at Christmas and every day of the year.

began to ask each other if they felt different and all agreed that something very strange had happened.

First that strange old man in the Santa suit had vanished during the night. They all agreed that they'd had the best sleep and most pleasant dreams they had since they were children and now they feel that they have just got to do something. One by one they looked across the street to the abandoned building and started to get ideas about making that old building into their home.

One said, "I'll go and talk to the

Noel

Good health, good friends...all the best to you and the ones you love.

JULIETTE'S HAIR STUDIO

Juliette & Rick

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL FRIENDS & CUSTOMERS

RUTH & TOM VOLQUARDSEN
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Merry Christmas Ann & Paul

By BRYAN HUNSBERGER
Age 8, second place

One Christmas Eve when the snow fell down constantly the trees whistled in the air and there was a nice fire going in the fireplace and Paul and Ann were having a nice Christmas Eve feast with their Mom and Dad. The Christmas tree was nicely decorated with some presents under it. The house was nicely decorated too with some pretty bells and some snowflakes all over the place.

Paul and Ann were so excited about Christmas morning. They were so busy talking about the presents they wanted. Paul wanted 10 things for Christmas. Ann wanted 11 things for Christmas. By that time it was Paul's and Ann's bed time.

Yes, today was Christmas Day. Paul got 8 from Santa, 1 from his Mom and Dad, 1 from Ann. Ann got 8 from Santa, 1 from her Mom and Dad and 2 from Paul.

They were both very, very happy with what they got because they got exactly what they wanted. That kept them busy for a long time.

Merry Christmas Ann and Paul.

Dear Santa:

I'm sorry about how greedy we were only thinking about ourselves wanting so much. I know it is not the real spirit and I know the real spirit. I'm sorry.

Love, Paul & Ann

The End.

Thinking of Christmas

By ADDI PERKINS
Age 7, first place

Me and Santa fix his sled Dec. 24. I'm feeling happy and excited. It's 8:30. I'm in my bed. I'm thinking of Christmas. Suddenly a bump. I put on my dressing gown and hurried downstairs. I put on my shoes and went outside.

Helping Santa

I saw Santa. I said "Santa, what brings you here in my front yard?"

"My sled's broken," he said gloomily.

"Can I help?" I said curiously.

"You have a workshop, don't you?"

"Yes," I said. "Want to go use some tools?"

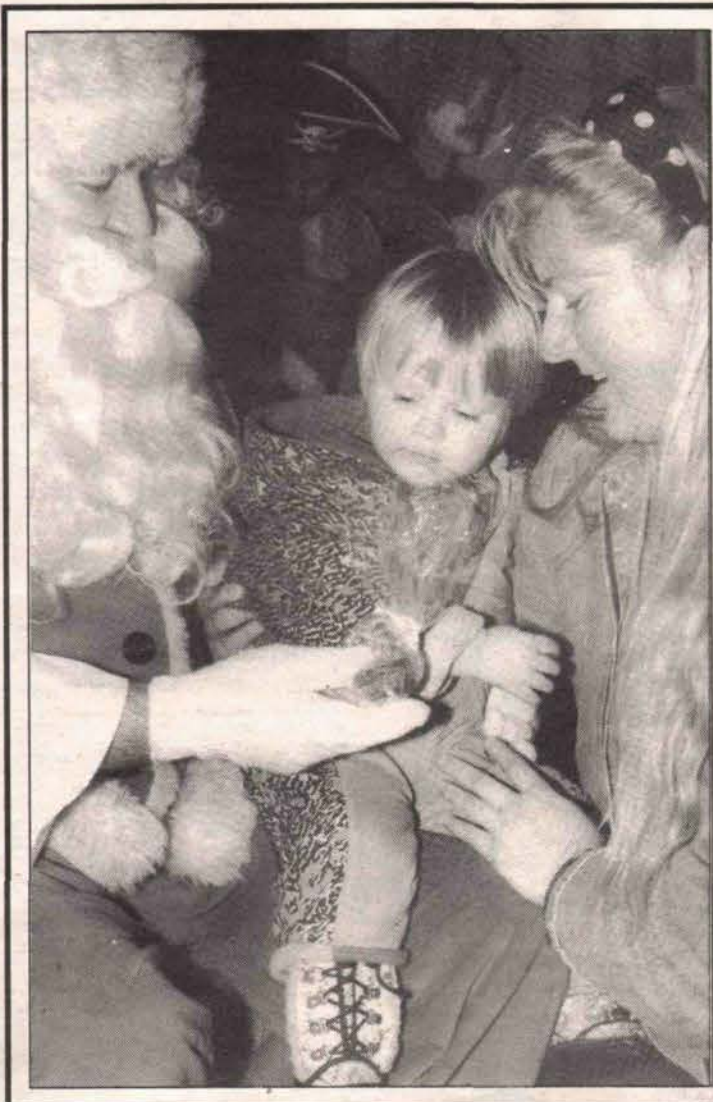
"Sure," said Santa. I said "Ill go get the key. By the way you still need to get some clothes on."

So I did that. We went down to the workshop.

Dawn

I opened the door. I got an electric screwdriver out. Santa held the runner on as I screwed it on. It was dawn when Santa left.

The End



Not so sure about Santa

Justice Cook-Hickman isn't completely sure about the guy in the funny suit as he is offered a bag of candy during Santa's visit to Ganges recently aboard the Bellingham Jaycees' Christmas Ship. Justice's aunt, Sheralin Cook, gives her nephew some reassurance that everything is okay.

Photo by Tony Richards

GLORIA OLSON

Chartered Accountant

539-5152

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Greetings
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is here, spend it in
Joy and Peace.

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everywhere there is
happiness, everywhere
a feeling of
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and bring a smile to your face this holiday season.

Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year!



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It's that time again.....

time to start thinking about the next edition of the Lions Club
Salt Spring Island Directory...

Personal Listings:

To add your new listing or change your current one.... simply complete and return the prepaid, pre-addressed business reply card at the back of the current directory.

Societies, Groups, Clubs, etc:

a) If you are in the current Directory, do nothing - you will be called for an update;

b) If you are not in the current Directory but wish to be listed in the "Societies" pages, please call us at 537-2000.

Business Listings:

a) If you're a current advertiser and your address has changed.... please call us at 537-2000 or complete and return the prepaid pre-addressed business reply card at the back of the current directory ASAP.

b) If you are a new advertiser, call us at 537-2000 before Christmas...tell our answering machine you would like an "Advertiser info package", and give it your name, address and phone number. You will receive your package early in January.

Lions Publications • 537-2000

The New Santa!!!!!!

By JOCELYN LANGDON,
SHEILA BALL and
SUSAN MAILEY
Age 9, first place

It was three weeks before Christmas and all through the house not a creature was stirring not even a mouse.

"Angela! That darn Rudolph has my slippers again."

"It's all right dear," said Mrs. Claus, "I'll go get them, you just sit and relax." Mrs. Claus went out to get them then she said "RUDOLPH GET A GRIP ON YOURSELF AND GIVE ME THOSE SLIPPERS!!!!!"

"There you are dear," said Mrs. Claus.

"Oh they have reindeer drool all over them again," said Santa, "And they are all wet!!!!. I guess I'll wash them," said Santa. "Honey, how in the world do you work this thing," said Santa. "It's spitting water at me again."

Two weeks later Santa woke up not feeling very well. "Angela!!! I don't feel very good!!" cried Santa.

"Just a minute," said Mrs. Claus. "Just let me get the thermometer. Your temperature is normal dear, oh no that means you've got the case of being too old."

"I can't be too old," argued Santa. "I have to deliver presents in one week."

"No you won't" said Mrs. Claus, "Until you're better, you're not getting out of bed" said Mrs. Claus, "Which won't be for two weeks or so."

"OH NO!!!!!" said Santa. "Who will deliver the presents?" said worried Santa.

"I will," said Mrs. Claus.

"You?" said Santa.

"No a dormouse, of course me," said Mrs. Claus.

"Oh no no no", said Santa.

"Well then who?" said Mrs. Claus.

"Well" said Santa "We could put an advertisement in the Daily Newspaper."

Two days later a Indian man came to Santa's door. "Hello" he said. "I came to apply for the Santa job," he said in an accent Santa could hardly understand.

Santa looked at the man and said, "Can you fly reindeer?"

"Well, no," said the man.

Santa looked sorry and turned down the man's offer. The next day an old man came hobbling to the door. Santa spoke to the old man and told him that if he wasn't able to hook-up the reindeer to his sled he didn't get the job. The old fellow looked down, shuf-



fled his old feet and shrugged his shoulders showing Santa that he wasn't capable of doing such a chore. Santa was getting worried, time was running out quickly.

The next person who came to Santa's door was a middle aged lady named BECKY. She looked strong and had experience with horses. She spoke about the sadness of poor children who might wake up to an empty Christmas tree if Santa didn't make up his mind in a hurry. Santa invited her in for hot tea and she gave him the story of her life. He could see that she truly cared about the spirit of Christmas and would make a really cool new Santa. She couldn't wait to see the smiles of happy children all over the world. Santa gave her a big hug and handed her the reins to the sleigh.

She climbed aboard with great bags of toys and shouted as she flew off: "No worries my man, be cool and I'll get this job done."

Santa looked up and listened to the new rap song that goes like this, "Hey Hey the new Santa is on her way and she is gonna stay till Christmas Day Hey Hey."

The End

Season's Greetings

Dear Friends:

Another year has past and we at Hanna Air Saltspring thank you for your patronage and support over past years. As Christmas is just around the corner and we approach a new year, filled with new challenges, let us think for a moment about the poor and under privileged around the globe who are suffering.

May we all continue to offer what help and support we can to those in need, and in so doing experience the lasting feeling of Christmas.

May 1995 be a healthy and prosperous year for all of you and your family and friends.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all of us:

Regards,
Randy, Brenda, Gene, & Staff
Hanna Air Saltspring

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Merry Christmas!

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Best Wishes from

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and *Spoke*

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Island Spoke Folk

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Hello there, Santa
 Timothy Ritenour checks out Santa Claus at the Ganges Activity Centre earlier this month when Santa came to town aboard the Christmas Ship. The ship's annual visit is hosted on Salt Spring by the volunteer firemen.

Photo by Tony Richards

Christmas Magic

Wishing you an enchanted Christmas and joyful new year.

Dr. Danny Dares, Katharine, Jasmine, Kyla, Lauren and Alyssa



The Funniest Christmas ever

By JESSICA KUZMICH
 Age 8, first place

Once upon a time there was a little girl. Her name is Jada, and she loves snow. She was sick in bed and all of her friends were outside playing out in the snow. She was lying in bed. She was looking out her window at her friends. She was feeling lonely. She went to sleep.

Then the next morning she was feeling better. She got to play with all of her friends. She built a snowman in her back yard. The next morning she woke up and it was almost all gone. It had melted. She got a big mixing bowl and she put all the rest under the deck. The sun came out from under the clouds and she said, "Aw..." She said to the snow "I will be right back."

She went into her house and she got a big tarp, went back outside and put the tarp on the deck, so the sun would not get the snow in the mixing bowl. By then she had to go in for lunch. After she ate she went back out to play. She came out a little too late and the snow in the bowl had already melted. She picked up the bowl of water and put it in her freezer. She went back out to play with her dog, and they had a snowball fight, then she went back in for dinner.

The next morning she woke up and did not remember that it was Christmas Eve. She got out of bed, got on one of her favourite dresses and she went and woke her mom up. Her mom got up and made a big breakfast that Jada ate: a peach pancake, a blueberry pancake and canned peaches on the side, cottage cheese.

After breakfast she went to play in her room. She played the teacher and said to her stuffed animals "The lesson for today is how fingernails grow. They come out of your fingers, I think." She went to eat her lunch. She ate all of it

and then went back to playing the same game. She played until it was time to go to bed.

She went to sleep and when she woke up in the morning she shouted yea! She woke the whole house up. Everybody came running downstairs to open their presents. Santa gave Jada a figure-skating Barbie. She loved it. Her mother got a new sweater and a scarf. She loved her presents too. Her Dad got a pair of gray woolly socks and he loved his presents. They ate breakfast. They had a good Christmas and they were all happy.

Christmas wishing star

By BRETTNEY SAVIN
 Age 6, second place

One morning when four kids woke up it was Christmas morning. They looked out the window and what they saw outside was the very, very special thing they put on their Christmas list; a wishing star.

On Christmas night they went out to wish on their wishing star. They wished that the star would stay there forever.

The next morning when they woke up, they looked out the window and the star was gone. It was a cloudy day. They could sort of see a point in the sky they hoped was their wishing star.

That night they went outside and wished that the star would come back. The next morning they woke up and could see the wishing star again. They were so happy that their wish came true.

That night they went outside and wished the star would never go away again. And their wish came true too.

All the Best in 1995!
 GANGES PHYSIOTHERAPY
 Betty, Rita, Emma & Marg

It's Christmas

and our hearts turn to look back on different days.

May your remembrances be warming and may this holiday season be a special memory in years to come. Merry Christmas from all of us at

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The Story of Rex 2

By BREE EAGLE,

Age 11, second place

As I looked at my wonderful home I wondered what all the lights were for. They were all over the house, red, white, blue and green, flashing on and off. They had never been there before.

I walked through my private door and overheard Ron and Dorothy's conversation.

"We're going to win that contest this year Dorothy," Ron was saying, "No one else has such nice lights!"

"Don't count your chickens before they're hatched," exclaimed Dorothy in her annoying mother like way. "That house down the street looks pretty good!"

"Not half as good as ours. Anyway this is our first Christmas in the new house and I can tell that it's going to be the best ever!"

There it was again, that word — Christmas. I had never heard that word before in my life, but for the past five days it had been on everyone's tongue.

As you've probably guessed, it's me Rex again, and this time I've got to find out what Christmas is. As I've said before I've never heard the word before in my life but it sure is annoying. For the past week my normally peaceful life has been rudely disrupted. Only a few days ago Dorothy put this ridiculous hat on my head. It's red with a white fuzzy lining and a bell that jingles when I walk. I begged and begged for her to take it off, but she wouldn't and I've had to live with it ever since.

This word also seems to have an effect on the neighbourhood children, as for the past week they have been dancing around singing, "Christmas is coming, Christmas is coming!" which is not too good when I'm trying to take a nap.

Well anyway I hope it ends soon, but I smell dinner and you know that I'm never one to turn down a good meal. I sniffed hopefully at my dish, "Oh goody, wet food tonight!"

I shoved my beautiful intelligent looking snout into my food and began to eat rapturously.

After dinner I decided to catch up on my sleep. I'd done enough thinking for today.

When I awoke, it was to Ron's loud and boisterous yelling, "Get up Rex. It's Christmas and we've got presents for you!"



When I didn't respond Dorothy called, "Rex it's breakfast time" at which I immediately bounded into

the kitchen.

After I had my breakfast and went out for a quick pee, Ron, much to my dismay, dragged me into the living room where I got the shock of my life. In the middle of the room was a huge tree. It appeared to have sprouted from the floor and was adorned with those flashing lights and other hideous things. On the top limb I noticed a large silver star. Beneath the tree were all sorts of packages and parcels all wrapped in bright paper. I guessed

that these were the presents that Ron had been talking about. Ron sat on the floor with me

and ruffled my fur. He then pulled Dorothy down beside us and grabbed one of the presents.

"This one's for you, Dorothy, and it's from me and Rex."

What was he talking about? I hadn't gotten presents for anybody. Dorothy grabbed the present, ripped off the wrapping paper and pulled out a brand new pair of mittens. Dorothy howled with delight, (a thing that she does often) gave Ron a big hug and gave me a big wet slobbery kiss on the nose.

Dorothy grabbed the next present and announced that it was for me. I couldn't very well take off the paper so Dorothy did it for me. When she was done she produced a gleaming new bowl complete

with sample packet of food. When I saw this I immediately jumped on Dorothy and Ron and covered their faces with kisses.

It went on like this for an hour or two, with me getting in addition to the food dish, a new collar, a gift certificate for a full makeover at the local Kennel Club (very befitting) and a brand new basket with its very own matching pillow and blanket.

That night after a wonderful dinner of Premium Choice Science Diet Extra out of my new dish Ron announced that Christmas was over for another year.

In the morning when I awoke from my new basket, I ran into the living room. The tree was gone. I ran outside and looked at the house. No flashing lights. I then decided that Christmas, whatever it was, was completely over and everything was going to be back to normal.

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