

CHECKER



HEADLIGHTS

DECEMBER 1983

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Co-Workers:

Firstly, let me express my personal holiday greetings to all of you here at Checker who made 1983 if not the most successful year in Checker's history at least a most memorable one. I am hopeful that the economic recovery starting in the latter part of this year will continue on through next year and make it possible for all of you at Checker to share in whatever benefits accrue to our company.

Thank you again for your devotion and hard work, and best wishes for a happy and prosperous 1984.

DAVID MARKIN
President

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Christmas Traditions

THE YULE LOG



Long ago, once each year in Persia, a tree was felled and a round section, or wheel, was cut from the trunk. This wheel was marked off into four segments representing the seasons of the year. This calendar-like segment was called a Yole and the log from which it was cut was a Yole Log. As each new season of the year began, the wheel was turned. A huge fire was started, and a portion of the Yole Log was placed in it as the people prayed for kindness during the coming season.

The Britons later adopted this custom as part of their Christmas celebration. The name was gradually changed to Yule. The barons opened their halls and all the people were welcome to enjoy the festivities as the great fire burned on the hearth.

ADVENT WREATH



This is a custom originating with German Lutherans and used in American homes today. The wreath is a circle of greenery with four candles evenly spaced. The candles are usually lavender in color and each candle represents one of the four weeks of Advent. The Advent season begins on the Sunday nearest the feast of St. Andrew and continues for four Sundays. One candle is lighted the first Sunday of Advent, and an additional one is lighted each week thereafter. Each Sunday when a candle is lighted, a short service is conducted by the family, including scripture, prayers and carols.

LIGHTS ON THE CHRISTMAS TREE



Martin Luther is thought to have been the first person to put candles on a Christmas tree. It is told that as he walked home one evening before Christmas, Luther felt a special closeness to the forest he was in, with the stars twinkling above. At home he placed candles on a small evergreen to recapture the scene for his children.

CANDLE IN THE WINDOW



The Irish are responsible for the ritual of placing a candle in the window at Christmas. On Christmas Eve, every Irish family wished to have a priest visit them to help celebrate, so they placed candles in the windows and left their doors unlocked so any priest who might be traveling nearby could be guided to their homes through the dark.

SANTA CLAUS



Santa Claus is America's contribution to Christmas tradition. Originally St. Nicholas, he was a somber, lean, pale figure. Later, Washington Irving presented him as a jolly, red-cheeked man. In 1822 Clement Moore wrote "A Visit From St. Nicholas" which was soon known the world over. Some time later Thomas Nash, a cartoonist, drew the Santa Claus we know today. The dark figure from Asia Minor originally known as St. Nicholas was forever replaced by the fat, jolly individual from the North Pole.

NATIVITY SCENES



Nativity scenes in the United States began chiefly with Moravian German-Americans living in Pennsylvania and in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. They call the scene a putz (rhymes with foot) and it includes a Nativity scene and scenes of a countryside including the most minute details. Much effort goes into the creation of a putz. Many families add a new figure each year. There is always one central figure – the Christ Child in a manger. The family gathers around the putz on Christmas Eve and sings Christmas carols, including the ever beloved "Silent Night."

CHRISTMAS CANDLES



The tradition of burning candles during Christmas goes back to the Romans. During the Saturnalia, candles were exchanged as tokens of cheerfulness and good will. The Jewish Feast of the Dedication also came near this time, and they used candles during this feast. It is very likely that, because of these two observances, thousands of candles were burning throughout Palestine at Jesus' birth.

WASSAIL BOWL



The wassail bowl we associate with Christmas comes from an old English custom. The bowl was chosen for its beauty and size. The liquor was made of ale or wine with spices and sugar, toast or roasted apples. Christmas carolers in England used to carry their wassail bowl from house to house as they caroled. At each home they would sing a song and offer a cup of wassail to those inside.

Merry Christmas



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from the Newsletter Staff

EDITOR'S NOTE:

We regret that it was not possible to include the pictures of *all* Checker employees in this issue. Some pictures did not turn out as well as others, and some employees were not available to have their pictures taken. We did try our very best and hope that those of you who did make the Christmas issue will be able to find yourself. Merry Christmas from the Checker Headlights Staff.