

FREE



A GOOD NEIGHBOR NEWS

"STRENGTHENING OUR LOCAL ECONOMY"

DECEMBER 2011

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The Star

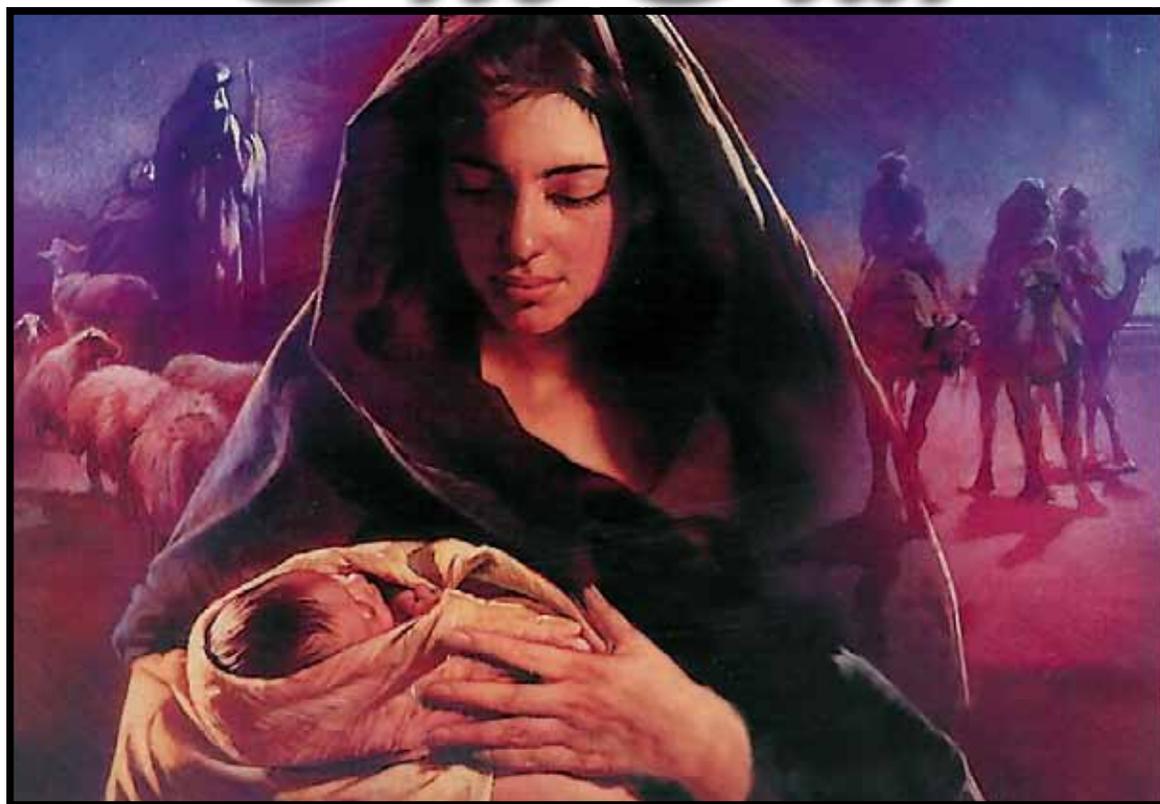
ISAIAH 9:6

For a child will be born to us,
a son will be given to us; And
the government will rest on His
shoulders; And His name will
be called Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God, Eternal Father,
Prince of Peace.



by Brenda Dwyer

I am weary from wandering in the night. We have been following the most fascinating star I have ever seen in the heavens. Our mounts groan from traveling so long. Their breathing is slightly labored and I can smell their sweat in the air as we progress. The star ... I can barely stand to turn my eyes away from it. It burns so pure & bright, it's hard to describe, and it's an illumination I'm not familiar with. It seems like we are getting closer ... just a bit more – the star burns ever so radiantly directly above me. It's sheer size is daunting and leaves me breathless. If I could only touch the tip of its tail, perhaps I could feel the presence of God. My mind is full of anticipation. The things we have heard have brought us to this place. The star ... it seems alive somehow! It draws us like a magnet. Town is busy tonight and although I long to check for lodging we feel compelled to head towards a specific small structure! Why would we be led here?! The night is drawing to a close. I just want to sleep. Oh well, if nothing else we can always leave the animals nearby and then seek shelter. I pull open the door and stop in my tracks. Before me lies a newborn infant in a manger, wrapped in swaddling and crying. I see a young girl lying on a pallet just to the babe's side. She looks exhausted and perspired, yet she



glows as if heaven's glory were reflected in her face. There is a young man nearby swaying back and forth on his knees ... openly praying and weeping with joy. I watch as the girl sits slowly and tenderly picks up the babe ... ever so gently and she rocks the child back and forth as she talks softly. I hear her say his name over and over ... Jesus, my Jesus, my precious Jesus. She is gazing upon this baby as if she were holding God himself. Then it hits me like a clap of lightning to

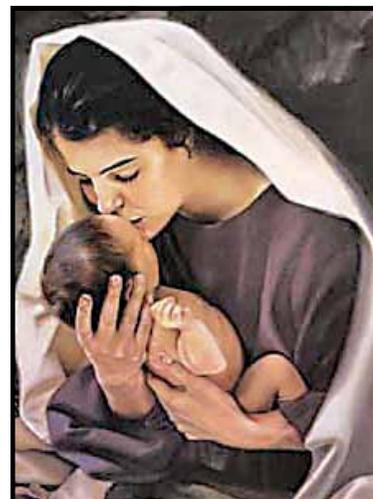
the heart ... she is holding God himself. I drop to my knees, feeling so completely unworthy of the sight before me. My God, my God ... you have come to us ... you have finally come. Selah.

This is just one imagining I have had over the years of how I think it may have been. I can't even imagine in my heart of hearts what Mary and Joseph must have been feeling once Jesus was finally in their presence, finally nestled in their arms. Can you imagine?

Have you? We were given the most unimaginably life-altering gift that night. This Christmas season my wish would be that every person on Earth could connect with that fact in a life-altering way, but if not that, then that they could at least connect with someone who holds that truth in their heart and is a true light in a dark world. This is a time of celebration, a time of great joy! Hark! HARK! Can you hear the angels sing? As the bells jingle, as we herald the birth of the New born

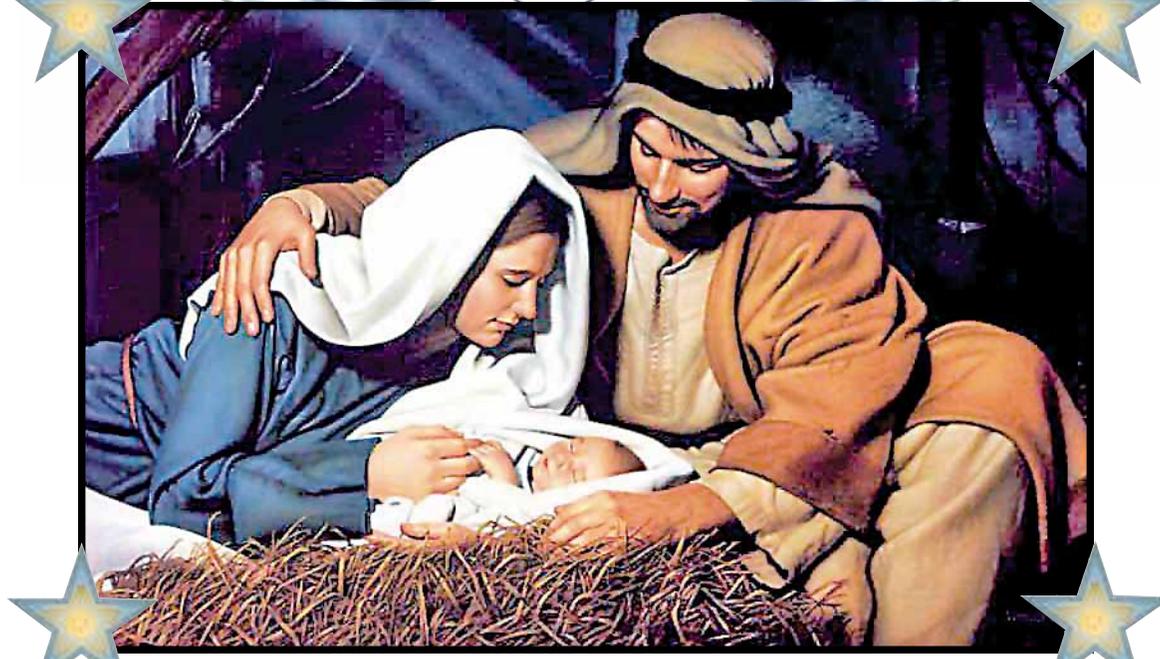
MATTHEW 1:21

"And she will
bear a Son;
and you shall call
His name Jesus,
for it is He who will
save His
people from their sins."



king, as the chestnuts roast on an open fire and we bask in the glory of the silent night ... may we all connect with the truth that we all carry in our souls and may Jesus feel and see in all of us a renewed sense of wonder and thankfulness. His glory humbles in such a way as to make me not want to quietly sing of it ... but instead makes me want to shout from the rooftops ... WAKE UP! WAKE UP AND SEE! CHRIST WAS BORN AND IS HERE TO BESTOW SALVATION UPON US ALL!

I pray that the hustle and bustle do not find you frazzled and once again disappointed in your fellow man but that instead you feel a spark that is begging to be ignited into the same sense of wonder that Mary must have felt when she first gazed upon her son's sweet face and realized in definitive truth that she was gazing upon the face of God. May the gifts you give be received with the same sense of wonder those first gifts given on Jesus' behalf were and may the gifts you give be gifts that inspire goodness in those that receive them. If you are not "feeling" any of what I've written then my gift to you this year is a prayer that someone you meet along your way will introduce you to feelings you have never felt before and that you too will believe! Merry Christmas everyone! From our hearts to your homes ... God bless!



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by Brenda Dwyer

There is a tea that I just can't get enough of in the winter months ... chai. It is rich with spices and leaves me feeling hugged after I've drained my cup. I like mine frothy and full of rich cream. There is a certain neighbor in a huge Quonset hut that knows how to brew it just the way I love it and I am thankful. I don't have it every day; it is a special treat that I enjoy twice a week or so. Another treat I enjoy with my chai (if you're going to splurge you might as well go all the way) are the smooth, creamy homemade caramels from a quaint little chocolate shop in town ... and while on the way there if I just happen to get sidetracked by the bling in a spicy little window then all the more reason to stop in, share greetings, and buy a bauble. It is simple pleasures such as these that are strung like so many blessings throughout the weeks and months that have me feeling even more humbled by living here in Middlebury. I may not have been born or raised here but my heart is full for the

people and places here and this is my home. May the beautiful decorations that adorn our little town this Christmas season bless you as you pass through and I would surely and highly recommend that you make the short trek to Bristol, Shippewana and Topeka to behold the splendor there! Let us all bless our small towns this season by shopping locally as much as we can ... as a small shop owner I can personally testify that you are ever so appreciated! It's the least we can all do to thank our small town merchants for keeping the integrity of our towns intact. Watch out Middlebury, Bristol, Shippewana and Topeka ... I haven't started my Christmas shopping yet (as usual) so here I come!!!



SALISBURY'S STAKE

by Stephanie J. Salisbury

January is most often the time of year when people begin to set their goals, make drastic lifestyle changes that may or may not endure the next few months, and deprive themselves of things they love in order to lose ten pounds or pay down a couple hundred dollars of their debt. Personally, I've attempted these things year after year only to find myself in the same trap come March: I have zero energy, zero willpower, and I get frustrated so easily I just start right back in with my old habits.

I'd love to say that's not going to happen this year, but I'm a realist. However, the one thing I can work on throughout the year and not give up on is acceptance. All of the negativity in my heart and my mind probably can't be eliminated, but I can choose to make better choices not just with my health and finances. I'm talking about better choices with my attitude.

Here is a fantastic quote that's painted on the wall in the kitchen at my place of employment:

"I discovered I always have choices, and sometimes it's only a choice of attitude." -- Judith Knowlton.

It's the truth. I might be enduring what I feel to be unimaginable circumstances, great pain emotionally and/or physically, and I might feel trapped, or that I have no choice in anything that's happening to me. But I do always have the choice of attitude. I can let the negativity pervade my spirit and leave me bitter, jaded, resentful, and full of anger and hatred. Or I can

choose to "accept life on life's terms" (Alcoholics Anonymous, P. 417) and remain positive and joyful regardless of the circumstances. The bottom line is this: the circumstances are going to occur regardless of my attitude! Why waste time allowing the bitterness and resentment to grow, thereby doing nothing but making me feel worse and worse with each passing day, inevitably making things worse for those around me because negativity breeds negativity? Why not focus on the positive things (which there always are, even if not on the surface) and allow my heart to be grateful, full of hope and happiness, even in the midst of a crisis? I reiterate: the crises will occur anyhow. The choice is in what we make of them.

In this world of Facebook, and Twitter, and the other 400 online venues for airing our laundry, I often see nothing but negatives. I'm not just talking about, "I had a flat tire today", or "A tree fell on my fence", but angry diatribes towards strangers, and passive-aggressive statements meant to hurt specific individuals. So often, people are easily influenced by what they immerse themselves in, and to be surrounded by such negativity on a daily basis is detrimental. I'm not one of those people who suggest running away from problems such as these, or sheltering ourselves away. I don't believe we're here merely to exist in the world. I

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CHILD'S PLAY



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From Our Kitchen

CREAM CHEESE CHRISTMAS COOKIES

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- 1/2 cup green sugar crystals
- 1/2 cup red sugar crystals
- 1 cup pecan halves

DIRECTIONS

1. Cream together the butter and cream cheese. Add sugar and vanilla; beat until light and fluffy.
2. Combine the flour and salt; gradually add to creamed mixture, beating until well blended. Stir in chopped pecans. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 15 minutes.
3. On four sheets of aluminum foil, shape dough into four 6 inch rolls, 1 1/2 inches in diameter. Wrap each roll tightly in foil and refrigerate overnight.
4. Preheat oven to 325 degrees F (165 degrees C). Line cookie sheets with foil. Remove rolls of dough from refrigerator one at a time. Coat each roll with red or green sugar crystals; cut dough into 1/4 inch slices.
5. Place on prepared cookie sheets; top each cookie with a pecan half. Bake for 15 to 18 minutes or until bottom of cookie is lightly browned when lifted.

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Grandmas

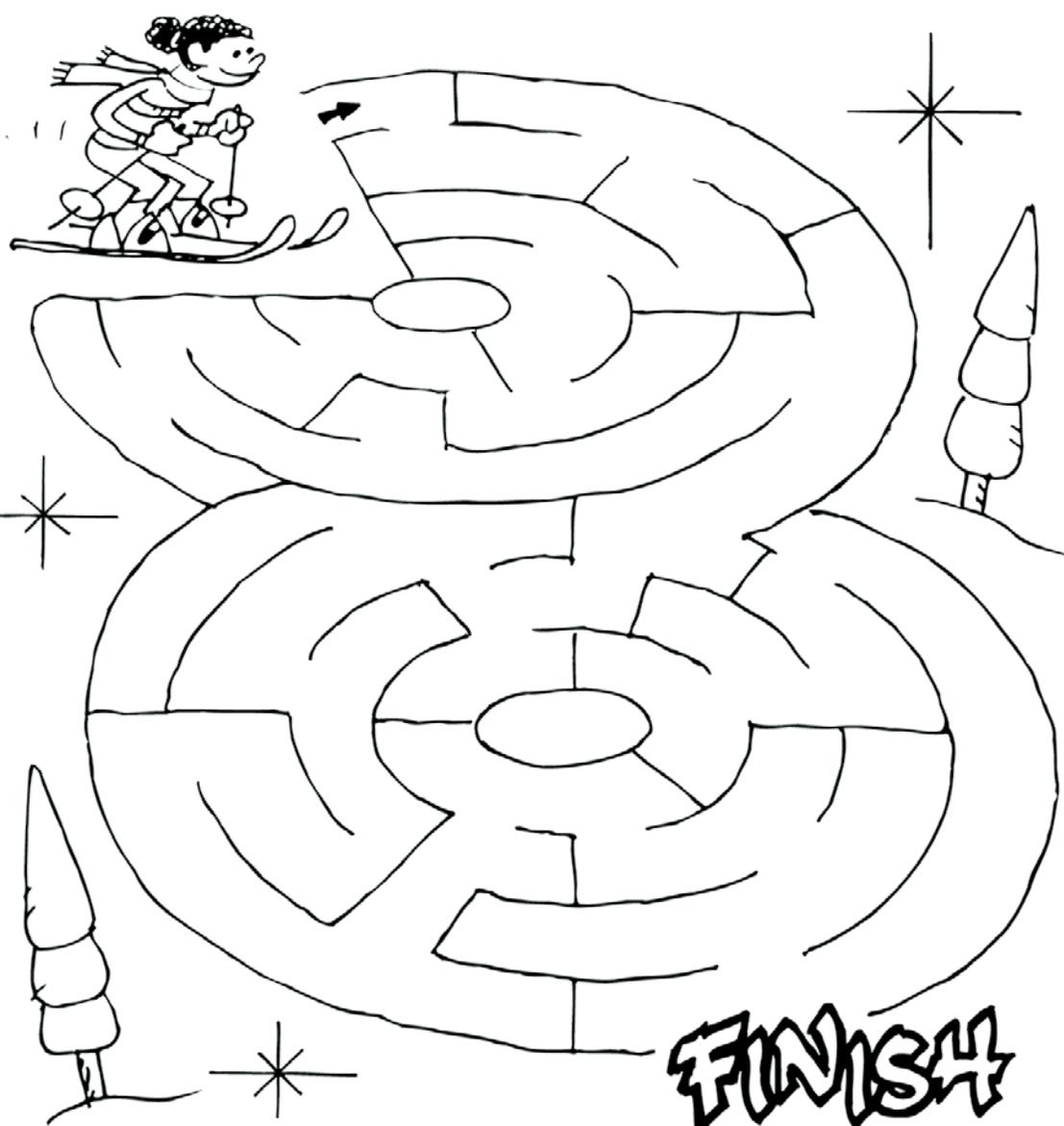


by Brenda Dwyer

This year will be a bit disjointed at Christmas. It will be one of those years where instead of everyone gathering on one day we will have children and grandchildren in and out over a span of 2 weeks (by my estimation). Every year realizes tradition in our home and yet it seems to be ever conforming to changing schedules and last-minute interruptions. I have to remind myself to take it all in with a grain of salt and be thankful for whatever time we can manage to salvage for each other. Every day someone does arrive is a gift filled with endless opportunity and surprise! Now,

back to simpler things ... even though we may not all be sitting down to a turkey and ham dinner together ... leftovers have a way of tasting even better once they become a casserole, a soup or some other delectable dish. Perhaps this year I can entice my children to bring their favorite leftover ham and chicken recipes with them and then go so far as to invite them to prepare them! Ha ha! I am definitely onto something big here (less work for me)! It seems time passes so fast; I haven't even started my baking yet. I wonder if there's any chance of me enticing them to "help" in that arena too. All in all I am looking forward to a wonderful extended holiday with my husband and family and I can't wait for it all to begin! May you and yours enjoy a beautiful, blessed and very Merry Christmas too!

KIDz KORNER



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COMMUNITY EVENTS

Humane Society Christmas Open House

Sponsored by: The Humane Society of Elkhart County
 Date: Sunday, December 4
 Time: 12:00 – 3:00 pm

Location: Humane Shelter of Elkhart County,
 54687 County Road 19, Bristol

General Information: Come meet the Shelter staff and volunteers, enjoy some refreshments and visit with the animals. Bring your pets to have their picture taken with Santa. Photos will be taken by Professional Pet Photographer, Janet Graham. (A food item donation and \$5 required). The Shelter is always in need of dog and cat food, cleaning and office supplies. Cash donations are always welcome. All donations are greatly appreciated!

The Red Barn Resale Shop will also be open for your holiday shopping.

For more information: 848-4225 or www.elkharthumanesociety.org

Pet Showcase Adoption Event

Sponsored by: The Humane Society of Elkhart County

Date/Time: Saturday, December 10, 10 am – 2 pm

Location: Pet Supplies Plus, 4024 Elkhart Road, Goshen

For more information call: The Humane Shelter at 848-4225

Shelter Website: www.elkharthumanesociety.org

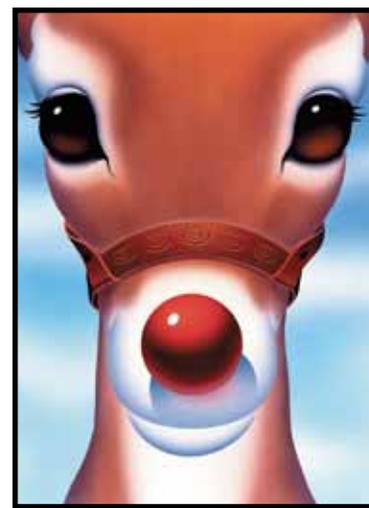


MEETING RUDOLPH

I saw Rudolph! I did! I know, I know, you don't believe me! I did see Rudolph ... at least I thought I did when I was 4 years old. My mom and dad had taken us to a Christmas parade in St. Louis and finally towards the end of the parade came what we had all been anxiously waiting for ... a beautiful white sleigh decked with all kinds of Christmas splendor (ivy, holly, evergreen boughs, & thistle) led by 9 reindeer! From where we were standing (at the very edge of the sidewalk) I could see clearly the beautiful sight before me. All of a sudden the reindeer turned to the left and came directly at me. They were moving slowly so I wasn't scared ... I was more excited than anything! I can still remember their sleigh bells as they approached! That's when I noticed Rudolph ... his nose was blackish except for some pink around the edges which I understood completely! His nose was just turned off right now! I could hardly breathe when I reached out my hand to touch it. He had the most beautiful big eyes and I fell head over heels in love. Well, that has been many years ago now and I did not realize then but discovered later that my father had arranged for

the reindeer to greet us. It was amazing; just one more way that my dad knew how to make the season of Christmas special and to be sure we realized the significance of Christmas and how important it is to honor it. The baby Jesus was always the ONLY reason we were celebrating and as a child I thought Santa was a special person that helped facilitate that celebration. Now that I am older I cherish those memories that allow me to view Christmas through the eyes of a child.

Happy, Happy Birthday Jesus!



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Merry Christmas

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 Chocolate Sensations - 110 Division Street
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 Eby's Family Fun - 14583 State Road 120
 Fluid Fun Canoe & Kayak Sales - 609 N. Division Street
 J & J Lawn & Garden - 19976 CR 6
 Kruse Farm Supply - 19904 CR 6
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 Crystal Valley Power Equipment - 11720W 250N
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 Fay Schwartz Attorney - 103 N Brown Street
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 Grand Rental Station - 131 Orpha Drive
 Healthy Pets - 851 US 20
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 Hoosier Tae Kwon Do, Inc. - 106 Wayne Street
 Indiana RV Connection - 503 N. Main
 Irontgate Self Storage - 53070 SR 13
 Jenkins Automotive (NAPA Auto Parts) - 132 Orpha Drive
 Jerry's Standard Service - 101 N. Main Street
 Justrite Nails - 851 US 20
 Long's Convenience Marathon - 995 US 20
 Middlebury Hills Restaurant - 104 US 20 (Corner of SR13 &
 US20)
 Middlebury K.O.A. - 52867 SR 13
 Monteith Tire - 132 Orpha Drive Suite B
 Mr. Appliance of Elkhart County - 53855 SR 13
 Old Creamery Antiques - 333 N. Main
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 Shady Lane Welding - 56322 County Road 35
 The Cinnamon Stick - 102 S. Main Street
 The Getaway Tanning & Hair Salon - 426-1 N. Main Street
 The Market Place - 511 S. Main
 The Out Post RV - 57756 CR 37
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 Ery's Vac Shop - 906 Linway Drive
 From Scratch Pet Bakery - 107 W. Washington Street
 Goshen Antique Mall - 107 S. Main Street
 Goshen Farm & Lawn Center, Inc. - 2413 Lincolnway East
 Hoogies Sports House - 119 E. Lincoln Ave.
 Jenkins Automotive (NAPA Auto Parts) - 1028 Lincolnway E.
 Joselena Fashions & Alterations - 125 East Lincoln Ave

Maple City Hobbies - 102 S. Main
 Merle Norman - 125 S. Main Street
 Monteith Tire - 1021 N. Greene Rd
 Monteith Tire & Auto Service Center - 2613 Caragana Ct.
 North Side Appliance Inc. - 1920 Elkhart Road
 Once Upon A Child - 4024 Elkhart Road
 Rain Drain Seamless Guttering, Inc. - 57273 SR 15
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 SRP Custom Graphics - 119 E. Lincoln Ave.
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 Dutchman Hunting Supplies - 8435 W. US 20
 Hostetler's Health & Wellness - 260 N. Morton Street
 Hostetler's Hudson Auto Museum - 760 S. VanBuren St
 Hostetler's Main Street Shoppe - 275 E. Main Street
 Indiana Auto Connection - 805 N. SR 5
 J. Farvers Book & Gift Shoppe - 455 S. VanBuren Street
 JoJo's Pretzels - 205 N. Harrison Street 1st Floor (Mercantile)
 L & R Marine - 8435 W. US 20
 L.A. Enterprises - 8275W 050N
 Lasting Impressions Gift Shoppe - 165 Harrison Street
 Lighthouse Christian Bookstore - 225 N. Harrison Street
 Morton Street Coffee - 260N. Morton Street
 Pampered Pet Boutique - 230 N. Morton Street
 R&S Floor to Wall - 9551W 750N
 Red Wagon Toys - 225 Harrison Street
 Shipshe General Store - 420 N. Van Buren Street
 Shipshevana Harness & Supplies - 815 N. Van Buren Street
 Shipshe Pizza - 145 N. Village Drive
 Shipshe Rental Center - 0900 N. SR 5
 Shipshevana Fitness Center, LLC - 505 E. North Village Drive
 Simple Sounds, Inc. - 225 N. Harrison Street
 Splash Waterpark Resort - 800 S. VanBuren
 Wellspring Components LLC - 1085N 850W

ELKHART:

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 Dumor Water Specialists - 4405 Wyland Dr.
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 Ink Cartridge Solutions - 1808 E. Bristol Street Suite G
 Insignia Promotions - 135 Easy Shopping Place
 Jenkins Automotive (NAPA Auto Parts) - 59045 CR 13
 Joshica's Planet Canine - 4411 Wyland Drive
 Martin's Pet & Garden Center - 116 W. Jackson Blvd.
 Paradise Pools - 655 CR 17 (Next to Lucchese's)
 Sautter's Floral & Greenhouse, Inc. - 1725 Toledo Road
 Sassi Tan - 56199 Parkway Ave Suite 10
 S-N-J's Heavenly Hair Salon - 23737 US 33 Suite F
 Spectrum Eyewear Gallery - Dr. David Britzke, O.D. - 56028
 Parkway Ave., Suite E
 Tip-n-Toe Nail Spa Parkway - 17 Plaza
 56199 Parkway Ave. Suite 10
 Tru Colors Hair Salon - 54595 CR 17 Suite 5
 Video Visions - 655 CR 17

HOWE:

Laura's Bakery - 1255 W. SR 120
 Laura's Country Store - 1255 W. SR 120
 R & S Carpet Cleaning - 7030N 575E
 The Gathering Place Restaurant - 407 3rd Street
 Twin Mills Camping Resort - 1675 W. SR 120

LAGRANGE:

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LIGONIER:

Dairy Queen - 909 Lincolnway S.

MISHAWAKA:

Once Upon A Child - 5936 Grape Road



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TALK ACROSS THE FENCE

by Brenda Dwyer

Lock the doors! Pull the blinds! Turn the lights off (and whatever you do ... don't answer the door!) There I was in the middle of panic town surrounded by cookie sheets galore, sprinkles that seemed to have sprinkled everything in sight, flour that had exploded and created a blanket of "snow" beneath my feet that was perfect for tracking all over the house and silver candied confetti that had somehow even gotten hung

up in my hair! I am going to try my best to explain how it happened although I would really love to know the "why" of it. It was a very busy day to begin with and I was trying to cram in some Christmas cookie making & baking time in the middle of it all but instead my day got longer, my chores more plentiful and the sense of being overwhelmed was somewhere around the explosive mark. Why do I even try to do this stuff anymore? People like me

who work as many hours as I do can't possibly be expected to have the halls decked, the cookies baked, the turkey and the house looking picturesque and the pups all dressed in their holiday splendor and still look sane ... or can they? When I went to grab for the bag of flour with one hand (the other hand held an open jar of red, green & white sprinkles) the flour

Continued to Page 13

A WORLD OF WONDERS

by Monica Clark

CHRISTMAS SURPRISE

Christmas is the time when miracles are looked for and found. Christmas is "some assembly required" which in reality means hours and hours of putting "Figure A into slot B" and fumbling through the toolbox to find just the right screw driver or crescent wrench to tighten that odd-shaped bolt. Christmas is charging up the new electronics and spending hours on hold, waiting for the "next available operator" while trying activate the latest gizmo.

Christmas is the smell of cinnamon and Evergreens. Christmas is ribbon candy, sticky fingers and half-eaten candy canes. It's making silly faces in the Christmas tree bulbs--mouth agape, giant eye, mountain nose, eyelash forest...and trying not to step on tiny lightbulbs while untangling the intertwined strands of the lights you so carefully stored last year.

What happens to them during the year in between? Do they wrap themselves together like those balls of mating Garter snakes up north? Is there some kind of supernatural rodeo going on where garden gnomes use Christmas lights

like tiny lassos until they are so wound up even the gnomes get bored? Some years it's easier to just buy new ones--lights, not garden gnomes!

Christmas is hurly-burly, gift wrapping, card-writing, trying to keep the cat out of the tree and making sure your "live" tree is not infested with hitchhikers. I say this because one year our Christmas tree arrived with a little something extra. Brad told me the small, brown cocoon was a Praying Mantis pod and I didn't believe him. I thought he was pulling my leg. I wish I'd listened. After Christmas was over, I saved the branch, put it high on a shelf in the den. I don't know what I was thinking. I should have saved it outdoors, in the shed...

I drove home one dark January evening to find every light in the house blazing. Brad met me at the door, "Come see what you did!"

"Me? I just got home!" He shook his head and beckoned me to the den.

I didn't see them at first. They were so tiny, about the size of mosquitoes. But once they came into focus, I took a step back. On virtually every

surface of the den was a miniature Praying Mantis--tiny, green things with bug eyes (no pun intended!). They were everywhere. I don't know how many Praying Mantises usually hatch from one of those pods, but I'm thinking this was a bumper crop! They climbed up the curtains. They walked up the walls. They clung to lampshades, photographs, file cabinets, bookshelves--you name it. They sat on the ceiling. Everywhere I looked, dark, accusing eyes glared back. I was guilty. I had upset the very balance of nature. I wanted to get back in the car and drive away, but instead I helped Brad pick up the tiny bugs and place them in a small aquarium. Let's just leave it there and say the story did not end well. In the dead of winter, there is little to feed a swarm of hungry young bugs. Sadly, we still occasionally find tiny, dried-out carcasses in odd places throughout the house.

So while you are enjoying the Christmas season with your family, just remember there could be hidden dangers lurking in your tree. Let's be careful! Merry Christmas one and all!



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Grid 1: A 10x10 grid with numbers 1-9 placed in various cells for a logic puzzle.

Grid 2: A 10x10 grid with numbers 1-9 placed in various cells for a logic puzzle.

WORD SEARCH

Word search grid containing letters for finding words.

- AMUSING
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ASHES
BROWN
CIVIL
CRANE
CRYING
DUNES
EASTERN
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EXPORT
FIELD
GATES
GEARS
GIANTS
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- IMAGE
INSTRUCTIONS
LIKED
MAIDS
MALES
MELODY
MINUTE
MUGGED
NEAR-BY
NINES
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RIVAL
ROBIN

- ROUNDS
SCORE
SIGHTS
SNACKS
SPOON
STORES
STORMY
TAKEN
THROW
VIBRATION
VIRUS
WHEAT
YOUNG
YOU'RE
YO-YOS

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

- ACROSS
1. DOOR FEATURE
5. CHRISTIAN SCIENCE FOUNDER
9. NEW MOON, E.G.
14. CONTROL FREAK
15. ACHY
16. HORSE OPERA
17. AROMA
18. CHECKED ITEM
19. CONTEMPTUOUS LOOK
20. ENERGY CONVERTERS (2 WDS)
23. BRIDGE PLAY (PL.)
24. MAP LINE
28. "GIVE IT ___!" (2 WDS)
29. BIG ___ CONFERENCE
31. FRENCH SUDAN, TODAY
32. LAWN MOWER'S PATH
35. SITS TIGHT
37. END
38. HIT BY THUNDERSTORM'S ELECTRICAL DISCHARGE (2 WDS)
41. "IS THAT ___?"
42. BULRUSH, E.G.
43. LIKE SOME BUCKETS
44. CLICKABLE IMAGE
46. ___ BIT
47. "WHEEL OF FORTUNE" BUY (2 WDS)
48. NOT AT ALL

- 50. MAKES RIGHT
53. JANUARY 1 TO DECEMBER 3 (2 WDS)
57. STRIKES WITH BEAK
60. CAMERON ___, ACTRESS
61. PLUNGE HEADFIRST
62. FITS
63. #1 SPOT
64. BATTERY CONTENTS
65. REGRETFUL
66. BUNGLE, WITH "UP"
67. CRAVINGS
DOWN
1. COMPREHEND
2. LOW POINT
3. KIND OF LAYER
4. ROBIN'S TIDYING SPOT
5. FORMER PORTUGUESE MONETARY UNIT
6. OPPORTUNITIES, SO TO SPEAK
7. BLAH
8. ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN
9. PRESENTS, AS A THREAT
10. TWO-WHEELED COVERED CARRIAGE
11. ABSORBED, AS A COST
12. "COMPRENDE?"
13. "TO ___ IS HUMAN ..."

- 21. ACROBAT'S GARB
22. DRESSED TO THE ___
25. DYE WITH WAX
26. SIMILAR
27. TURN RED OR YELLOW, SAY
29. BIT OF COLOR
30. HALFTIME LEAD, E.G.
32. ASSASSINATED
33. HAM RADIO RESPONSE
34. BURNING
35. DWELL
36. HABITUAL DRUG USER
39. HANDRAIL SUPPORT
40. TIME OF FINANCIAL NEED (2 WDS)
45. NEIGH SOFTLY
47. BLOWS AWAY
49. FLIP, IN A WAY
50. MONROE'S SUCCESSOR
51. PREPARE FOR WINTER TAKEOFF
52. SMALL SPREADING JUNIPER BUSH
54. ___ CHEESE
55. "GOOD GOING!"
56. 1990 WORLD SERIES CHAMPS
57. ___ DE DEUX
58. "I" PROBLEM
59. BLACKGUARD

Crossword puzzle grid with numbered starting points for clues.

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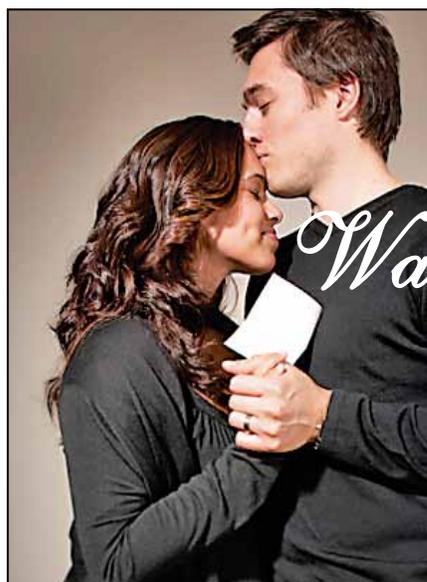
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JUST A THOUGHT

by Uncle Bill

A dirty old man down on his luck, sits by the road side. The snow flies, and the temperature chills him to the bone. People pass by, often looking the other way. It's easier to turn your head, than to make eye contact with someone who needs something. Have you ever wondered what caused this person to get to where they are at that very moment? I've always tried to help... a word of encouragement, a warm meal, or a ride to a shelter where they can get in out of the cold, and have a peaceful nights rest. We live in a time where we see this proud country of ours helping others in need all around the world, but yet I see homeless people in every city I visit here in

America. People often blame them of being "lazy", "drug addicts", or "alcoholics". In the end, does it matter?? Why do people label others who are less fortunate? I've talked to homeless men who fought for our country, and others who have lost their families. Often times, they just want someone to listen, giving them a chance to show you they are capable of great things. When you walk by someone who needs help, I ask that you try... that you offer anything you can. There is a voice that whispers to all of us; some call it conscience, I call it God. Remember... "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you".



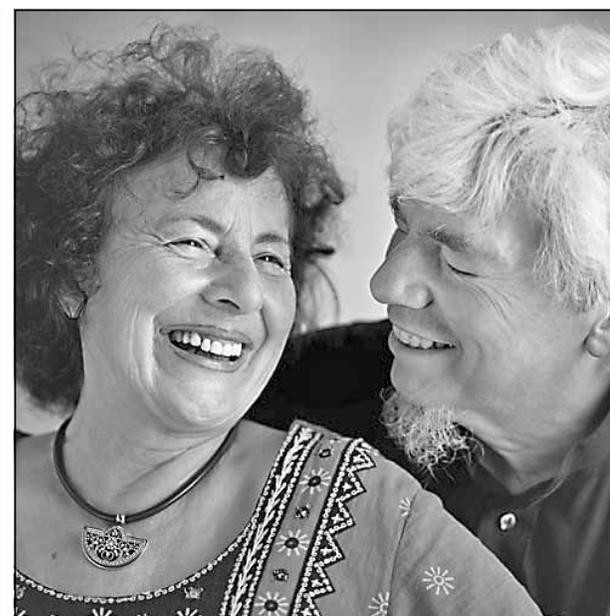
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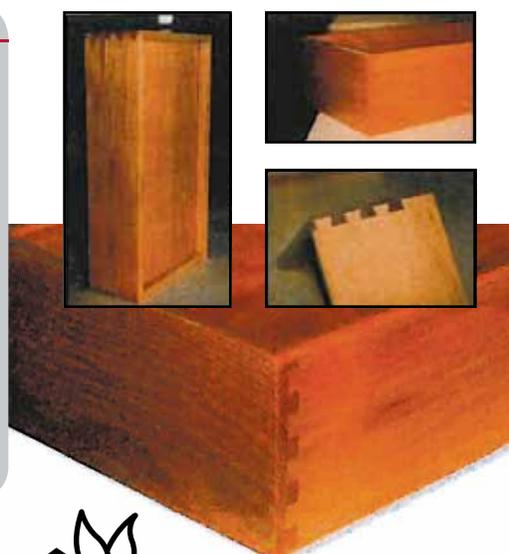
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FARM COUNTRY MOOS

by Loretta Miller

Dave and I just got home from checking out a new pony for our four scholars to drive to school. It seemed like a keeper, so guess we'll welcome him into the fray. Our other pony is just a notch unruly for our liking (he's still young). Well, the other morning was the clinches! We ate breakfast and Keith went out to the barn to fetch him in and I thought I would so kindly go help him out obviously not the best idea after all cause as soon as he saw me with the bridle he decided to head for the back forty. I must not have looked too friendly? Anyway my husband, JoAnne, and Keith took off after him. After all was said and done they were late for school. So anyway, we have a pony for sale. Any offers? We might even give him away if the timing's right. Today was such a beautiful day, I decided to wash curtains and couch cushion covers real quick like. My laundry from these cushion covers was sooo dirty. I won't elaborate but I made sure all the kids smelled them. Yes, they smell good ... "real good" Sherlyn said. Well, anyway hanging up curtains, sweet smelling or not is not my favorite thing to do. Well I was really getting into the swing of things having hung two curtains with no

setbacks. I was on my third curtain, trying to very quietly sidestep my sleeping, unsuspecting 3 year old, when I made the mistake. I stepped onto the back of my breakfast table and ker bang before I knew what was happening I was on my back looking straight up. Not a good feeling. But I actually (if you can imagine this) managed to do it quite gracefully ... sorta slow and easy like. But never the less ultimately BANG. Toddler started crying (what just shook the house)? But after the initial shock I was more worried about the damage to the table than myself. By then the scholars were home so JoAnne helped me find some screws to patch it up a little. All's well that ends well. Dave and I got home from our errands and Velda had made supper and fed our little crew. Now the house is very quiet and peaceful. Wishing God's love to everyone.

Note: Loretta sent this in just in time for December's Issue:

I have a little bit of spare time so I thought I'd jot down some of my thoughts. My smaller children are working on word search puzzles here beside me. They seem to really enjoy that. I never really gave it a thought that 7 and 6 year olds could get so involved in those but it seems it's

a hit around here. So if anyone needs a winter project for your little ones, invest in a few pads of those. My husband can really get wrapped up in those too. I bought them for 99cents; an inexpensive way to pass the time. I read an article today about a journalist who went to Iran to get information for a story. It was his fifth time to go there so he didn't think much of it. But this time he got hit by a roadside bomb. His face got messed up pretty bad. They had to take out part of his skull so he wouldn't get brain damage caused by swelling of the brain. It took 5 weeks 'til he spoke his first word. Remarkable, he says the thing he most remembers about the accident was not so much the shrapnel that hit him as the bright white light that surrounded him before he got jolted to reality and taken to the hospital. He said he thinks it was a little piece of heaven and since that incident he's not afraid to die. We can find scripture to back this up too it makes perfect sense. In John 11:25-26 Jesus said "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies and whoever lives and believes in me

Continued to Page 15

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DESTRI OF NOCHAM



by Brenda Dwyer ©

Once upon a time in the land of Nocham there was a little red-headed girl named Destri. She had little ringlets of hair that framed her tiny face and caused her electric blue eyes to “pop”. Her nose was upturned and her lips were pouty. She had a sprinkling of freckles across her nose. Her little knees were scraped up from climbing knarly, knotted trees and she loved to spend her days up in the canopies of those trees. The reason I give you such a detailed description of Destri is that once you are into my story you will need to be reminded that she is just a waif of a child. No one really ever knew how old Destri was. She was raised more by her village than a specific mother. You see, Destri’s mother passed on shortly after Destri was born

and then the next evening (a very dry & hot night) the village was taken by a fire that swept through the land and the “keeper of the gens” – the person assigned by the village to keep track of its citizens was never seen or heard from again. Destri wondered into the deep forestation often as a toddler; it seemed to draw her in. She endured many rounds of discipline for going in alone and yet she always returned because it felt more like home to her than any other place. In the forest, a long ways away from Nocham, Destri discovered a system of caves. In those caves were artifacts left behind from Nochis that must have lived there thousands of years before. Destri loved to play with the old utensils, tools, furniture and other items and would pretend that the caves were her kingdom.

Day after day she would return and on the way both in and out she noticed things that would make it quite possible for a girl of her age to thrive on. There were berries and plants that she had helped to prepare for eating many times in Nocham. Destri never ran into another Nochi when she was in the forest. Nochis were afraid of the forest. It was taboo to go there. When the time drew nearer for Destri to be presented for consideration to be incansed (a term we will explain much later in the story) she knew what she had to do. She did not want to stay in Nocham for it had never felt like home to her. Destri knew her destiny did not lie in Nocham ... she would name her discovered kingdom and reside there instead. (to be continued)

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THE MEMORY BANK

by Bill Raybuck

Christmas is coming... are you on Santa's "Good" or "Naughty" list? This year has flown by, bringing challenges and inevitable change. I've tried to learn as much as I can, and use the knowledge I've gained to grow as a person, both emotionally as well as spiritually. I've faltered, but I know what I need to work on, and as they say... "Knowing is half the battle".

This time of year always brings back wonderful memories. I remember sitting with my Mom and Dad watching the snow fall, and talking about how it was for them growing up. Times have changed; the world has changed, but when you hear a Christmas song it always takes you back. Think back to the thrill of Christmas morning... your parents looking tired, obviously from "help-

ing" Santa the night before with his delivery of the presents... tearing the bows and wrapping off of your gifts, and being so excited. I remember the smells of dinner cooking away, and sneaking into the kitchen for whatever I could grab before getting caught. This time of year, more than any other is when I miss my Parents the most. My favorite memory of them at Christmas is the time I surprised them with a new television. They had this old floor model Zenith for years and years, and never even thought about replacing it with a new updated version, then literally a few days before Christmas the tube inside finally blew out. My Mom called me with the tragic news, and sounded so upset. I remember jumping in the car and racing to the nearest electronics store and finding a flat

screen and an entertainment center with plenty of extra room for my Mom's assorted knickknacks. On Christmas morning I drove over to their house and carried in some small gifts, and as they opened them up, I said "I think I left something in the car." When I walked in the house with these big boxes, My Mom and Dad had the funniest looks on their faces. They tore the wrapping off so fast; it would have made a child jealous. With tears in their eyes, they hugged me, and thanked me for thinking of them and making them so happy. Remember what this time of year means, show love to those less fortunate, and carry a song in your heart. To my Mom and Dad looking down on me now, I simply say, "I'll be home for Christmas... if only in my dreams."

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TALK ACROSS THE FENCE

Continued to Page 7

slipped and exploded on impact with the floor ... WHOOSH ... everything became a very eerie white and sprinkles flew to all ends of the kitchen and dining room. While this catastrophe was taking place I was trying to keep the flour from impacting the floor and the sprinkles from falling and I managed to hit the edge of the shelf that the silver candied confetti were on above me and as fate would have it they were opened so by the time I came up for air I looked like a very white angel (I'd like to think) with silver sprinkles creating an alluring halo upon my head. (Okay ... maybe I really looked more like a Raggedy Ann or a Pippi Longstocking than an angel but still ...) All of a sudden I started to laugh and realized that I would almost be overjoyed should company drop in right now ... at least then I'd have someone to help me out! Like every other seemingly HUGE yet alarmingly small crisis in my life ... this too passed with a bit of folly and fun and I thanked God for it in hindsight. One more memorable Christmas baking day ... tucked in with shopping, laundry, etc. and when I laid my head on my pillow that night I had a big smile on my face.

SALISBURY'S STAKE

Continued to Page 2

believe we're here to change it. That being said, your attitude is your choice. It's easy to type something that you wouldn't say to someone's face. Instead of making that something bitter, or something cruel, or something hurtful - why not make it something complimentary? Why not tell the world what went right for you today? Why not tell everyone how great someone else did?

It's time to bring back the joy into our lives. It's true that our world is in shambles - unemployment, poverty, and unspeakably awful news - by it's also a world full of beauty, and excitement, and happiness. We need to learn to accept our circumstances, do our best to change things for the better, and live with joy in contentment in our hearts. Let this be a truly Happy New Year!



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SANTA'S BIG HELPER

by Brenda Dwyer

There I was in the middle of mall-madness (a term used to refer to the craziness in the malls this time of year) when all of a sudden I was stopped in my tracks by a little boy that I would guess was around 3 foot

tall slamming into my knees. He looked up and asked me if I had seen which way Santa had gone. First thing that flashed through my mind was "where are his parents" ... I did a quick scan and didn't see anyone looking for a child. The

second thought was "Wow! Is Santa here?" ... you can't blame me ... his excitement was crazy contagious! Ha ha! I shuffled my bags to my side to peek down and capture a better view of the excited little person still hanging onto my knees. His eyes were huge with expectation and his little hands were holding firmly to my jeans apparently locked on until an answer was found. I told him that first of all I needed to know where his mommy or daddy was. You could tell by the look on his little face that it hadn't dawned on him that he had gotten separated from them in his excitement. Before he could even respond a very worried looking young mother came rushing through the crowd calling "Sam ... Sam ..." and I knew in an instant that this must be Sam before me. She caught up to us and I explained to her, as best as I could surmise that it was obviously very important to Mr. Sam to find Santa. Yes, his mother explained ... Sam wanted to ask Santa if he could bring his daddy good health for Christmas. It seems Sam's daddy has cancer and is struggling through treatment. Sam had even brought cookies for Santa that mommy helped him bake; an early offering for a

gift strongly desired from the heart. I bent down and told Sam that I would help him and his mom find Santa but that he would have to stay right with us and not go sprinting off. He promised he would. We found Santa in short order - right where he was supposed to be. I stood to the side to watch this excited and expectant child climb upon the lap of Santa where he proceeded to tell him of his Christmas wish. Do you know what the very best part was? When Sam told Santa that he wanted his daddy to get better because he has cancer Santa hugged Sam and told him this ... "Sam, I will wish my very most that your Christmas wish comes true but I will have to call on someone much bigger than myself to help me out on this one ... I will pray faithfully that God place a healing hand on your daddy and then we will have to rely on our trust." Sam was, well, I can't think of a better word than joyous when he climbed down off of Santa's lap to go be with his mom. She had tears staining her cheeks but she smiled a very big smile at Sam and gave him a big hug. There's nothing better in this world that to be a witness that God is ever near. :)

AN AMAZING MAN



The 16th of this year will mark our 5th wedding anniversary. I am amazed at how quickly time has passed. Some days it seems like we just got married - other days it feels like we've been married forever (in a good way). Marriage is the hardest commitment two people can enter into. There has to be compromise, give and take, agreements to disagree combined with love and respect enough to cover it all. There has to be grace and forgiveness. There has to be a team effort. There has to be open communication and the ability to make good decisions, together. Every day I am reminded (without Bob even knowing) of why I agreed to marry him. It might be something he says or something he does or it could even be something as simple, yet profound as the love I see in his eyes when he looks at me. I can only hope that with God's help I become ever better at being the wife I hope to be to him. We are an unlikely pair in that we come from drastically different backgrounds. He grew up in a huge metropolitan city while I was growing up in a "Norman Rockwell" neighborhood in a small town. He was an entrepreneur at the age of 9 ... I was helping my brothers deliver newspapers when I was 11. He started his first Heating & Cooling business when he was in his early 20's ... while I was having babies and working my way up the ladder in corporate America. I have met some amazing people in my lifetime and I can say with conviction that he is one of them. 2011 has been an amazing year and I am really looking forward to the 16th when I can look into his eyes and say with certainty that I would say yes all over again without a moment's hesitation.

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A CHRISTMAS FORETHOUGHT

By Lori Pooler

Christmas is that time of year
 A time of giving and time of cheer
 Look in your heart and find that place
 To put a smile on someone's face
 A time of sharing it should be
 Give some love and you will see
 A loving gesture conquers all
 No matter the deed; large or small
 Ignore the pushing and the shoving
 Rise above and show some loving
 Kindness evolves from the heart
 A simple smile could be a start
 Have some patience, wait your turn
 Light the candle so it may burn
 Warmth flows outward from inside
 Let joy and happiness be your guide
 Peace and joy should be year round
 But mainly Christmas time it's found
 To give is better, that is true
 Adding love and hope in all we do.

FARM COUNTRY MOOS

by Loretta Miller

Continued from Page 10

will never die. The journalist in Iraq said it was a feeling of peace he will never forget. Let's all remember that and not be so scared should death come knocking. Well, Christmas is just around the corner. What a cozy feeling! But I realize for a lot of people that will mean a day without a loved one. Maybe the first Christmas they have faced alone or without their life partner. My heart goes out to people like this. Let's try to make the holidays special for these people. We all know at least one person we can bring cheer to, be it a bouquet of flowers or a special card, or a basket of fruit. Let's make our personal goal this year to bring extra cheer to at least one person. One of my special friends died of cancer last week. How can this be ... but the rest of us have to travel on. Let's help each other.

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