

Calendar

By Lynn Elber
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — 'Tis the season to gather around the TV set and receive our holiday cheer electronically.

It's that or another trip to the mall, where getting into the spirit of the season is much more expensive.

So pour the eggnog, pick up the remote and say "hello" to old favorites such as CBS' "A Charlie Brown Christmas" and such inventive newcomers as Fox Family Channel's "Santa Mouse and the Ratdeer." Here are the highlights (all times EST):

MOVIES:

"Special Delivery," 8 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 10, Fox Family Channel, stars Andy Dick as a bumbling adoption agency courier trying to deliver a baby boy to his new family in time for the holidays.

"Holiday Heart," 8 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 10, Showtime, features Ving Rhames as a melancholy drag queen who helps a mother (Alfre Woodard) and her daughter discover the meaning of family.

"Once Upon a Christmas," 9 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 10, PAX, stars Kathy Ireland in the tale of a peeved Santa, fed up with a growing list of naughty children, who declares an end to Christmas.

"It's a Wonderful Life," 8 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 16, NBC, is an exclusive airing of the bittersweet Frank Capra fantasy with James Stewart, Donna Reed and Henry Travers as Clarence the angel.

"The Christmas Secret," 9 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 17, CBS, stars Richard Thomas and Beau Bridges in the story of a scientist who, trying to prove reindeer can fly, learns about faith and family.

ANIMATION:

"The Year Without a Santa Claus," 8 p.m. Monday, Dec. 4, Fox Family Channel, boasts the voices of Shirley Booth, Mickey Rooney and Dick Shawn in a tale about an unhappy Santa going AWOL.

"Mickey's Christmas Carol," 8 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 9, ABC, features Mickey Mouse, Goofy and the rest of the gang in a Disneyized version of the Dickens classic.

"A Charlie Brown Christmas," 8 p.m. Monday, Dec. 11, CBS, lets holiday activists Charlie Brown and pal Linus once again remind the world that Christmas means more than tinsel and toys.

"Olive, the Other Reindeer," 9 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 14, Fox, features Drew Barrymore as the voice of Olive, a dog who pitches in to save Christmas when Blitzen the reindeer is put on the disabled list.

"Santa Mouse and the Ratdeer," 12:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 22, Fox Family Channel, finds Santa Mouse with a broken sleigh on Christmas Eve and ready to give up until Rosie Mouse gives him and his faithful ratdeer a boost.

FA LA LA LA LA:

"Holiday at Pops 2000," 8 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 16, A&E Network, features conductor Keith Lockhart, the Boston Pops Orchestra, the Tanglewood Festival Chorus and guests Martina McBride, Take 6 and Jimmy Tingle.

"Christmas in Washington," 8 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 17, TNT, has Sarah Michelle Gellar as host of the concert that includes President Clinton among its guests. The Corrs, Billy Gilman, Brian McKnight and Jessica Simpson are to perform.



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