



Homo for the holidays

'Tis the season melancholy

Call me Scrooge, but I friggin' hate Christmas. There's something wrong with a day where you're made to feel like a loser if you're not heading over the river and through the woods to Grandmother's house we go.

Never mind that Grandma's a lush and Grandpa's a lech—just get in the sleigh and shut up.

I've felt this way since I was 12, and my mom took off, leaving my dad custody of the kids and Christmas. Chase didn't know how to make eggs, let alone eggnog, so we began the tradition of avoiding our lonely, empty house by going to the movies instead.

Nowadays movies do big business on Christmas, but back in 1978 the theaters were practically empty, save us and a smattering of Jews with nowhere else to go. It was fun, actually—almost subversive.

Then when I was a 20 I married a Jew myself, who taught me the ancient Hebraic custom of ordering Chinese takeout for Christmas dinner.

Since then I've experimented with different coping mechanisms. Despite my antipathy for the day, I'm still good company, so I would accept invitations to other people's family celebrations. Warning: Unless you enjoy watching other people walk away with more merchandise than Winona Ryder in Saks, never ever do this.

Now we stick with the movies. For weeks Floyd and I pore over reviews the way kids look through the Toys "R" Us catalog, carefully choosing a double feature to fill the day. Sometimes friends join us, but there's no compromising: It's our tradition, so we choose the movies.

But in case the cinematic solution doesn't work for you, I've asked those on my mailing list for holiday survival techniques. More than 40 readers provided a pretty comprehensive cross section of opinions.

For starters, there are those who actually like spending time with their families on holidays.

Yeah, I know, whatever. Moving on...

Then there are those who still do the family thing but make sure they pop a couple of Xanax first. The winner of this year's Most Dysfunctional Family Award goes to my friend CM, a bi woman who told me how she went to her holiday gathering expecting a confrontation with her psycho Christian sister (the one who thinks Dubya is too liberal) but instead had a blowup with her bi sister, who revealed she had slept with the woman CM was dating. "She has no sexual identity other than 'greedy,'" CM says.

Of course there are those queens who simply use the season as an outlet for their creative energy, madly decorating their homes like

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARC

by Marc Acito



Martha Stewart on speed. Jesse of Atlanta went to an enormous amount of trouble one year, only to have his mother develop an allergy to his Christmas tree and swell up like Cher before the collagen settled. (Note to self: Try this the next time Mom visits for the holidays.)

A surprising number of people came out to their families at Christmas. (Now there's a gift they weren't expecting.) I can just see it—the whole brood gathered around the old Pianola while the pretty son with the sweet voice sings, "O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum, I'm dating Adam Tannenbaum...." Or if they're celebrating Hanukkah, "Oh dreidel, dreidel, dreidel, I'm Jewish and I'm gay...."

One woman chooses a Christmas book the way Floyd and I choose Christmas movies. "Christmas I often spend alone. By choice," wrote Anna. "I read a novel (cover to cover). And I walk the beach at sunset." Sounds a lot better than listening to Uncle Phil's story about Scotchgarding his tent, doesn't it?

(I'd like to add that Anna furthers demonstrates enormous good sense by choosing to see her family on the Fourth of July instead, based on the sound principle that it's easier to escape when you're already outdoors.)

But the happiest of all seem to be those who truly make the yuletide gay. J from L.A. (I'm not being coy here; that's his name) told me he always gets together with friends. They play games and swap stories to see who's endured the most monotonous phone call home.

"The best part is how we laugh," he said. "Loudly. Infectiously. Honestly.... We spend a dozen hours together and wish there were more to be had...together with people who love you unconditionally. My family loves me unconditionally, too, in their own way—with that grain of regret, silently asking me to try once more to be who I am not."

So here's to having a homo Hanukkah, a kweer Kwanzaa, a sissy solstice and a very Mary Christmas.

And that, my friends, is The Gospel According to Marc. ☐

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