



From behind the wall

by Larry Baker #35021
O.S.P. Correspondent

What is Christmas all about?
What does a Prayer provide?
What are such things as Kindness, Concern, Love and Hope?

If these are answers found inside a Christmas package sent to a prisoner, then this Prison Correspondent has been receiving a Christmas package each and every week since he first became associated with the *Portland Observer* (since the second week of March 1977).

On this very night as he sat inside his cell, with pen in hand, preparing the next issue of "Behind the Walls," he feels grateful to the *Portland Observer* for opening this most valuable avenue of communication and information from a prisoner to readers of weekly publications all over the U.S.

The material gathered each week for this column has been written and produced within the cells of this institution. Many of these cells are no longer the most loneliest places in the world for some of these men and women who occupy them night after night. It was from many of these cells that gave birth to the "Behind the Walls" column. It could not have been born anywhere else without the thoughts of these incarcerated men and women in the loneliness and the stillness of their own little worlds behind bars - some in fear, others in happiness, many in silence, trying to express in writing their pains, sorrows and joys to the whole wide world.

It has been a Christmas present week after week throughout the past nine months - to watch a face light-up while watching a prisoner read and re-read something he may have written and is now for the first time seeing it in print.

But one of the most constructive and beautiful achievements being accomplished in the area right now is the privilege of the Oregon public to obtain a closer insight of persons who for years have been labeled "social outcasts" and "human rejects"; who have been tucked away behind bars somewhere in one of Salem, Oregon's cuckoo nests. Many of these same citizens have read what a prisoner may have spent many weeks in preparing and many have responded with their points of view. Some have even changed their opinions through cor-

responding directly with the writer of the article printed in "Behind the Walls", and found out that many of the prisoners in these cells are only people too, as strange as it may sound.

And yet, stranger, during the development of this column the primary purpose and goals for "Behind the Walls" column was to open the avenues for communication, **PEOPLE MEETING PEOPLE**, and expressing on subjects of the writer's choosing - proving once again, that freedom of press and freedom of speech are a **Constitutional Right**, that just too many Americans have given their lives to protect. **May no bars, nor walls or gun towers ever bottle-up, such a valuable tool.**

Sure enough, some of us, who are prisoners of the Oregon State Penitentiary, may actually belong here and will remain here until that **last breath**, but may it be acknowledged that even the prisoner can leave something of value and everlasting to the world...be it a **life story** or something as simple as a **Christmas poem** written for the first time.

As a letter received last week which was written by an interested citizen of Oregon, "I am amazed at the intelligence displayed by many of the prisoners who have submitted articles to 'Behind the Walls,' column each week."

This Correspondent replied in writing, "Don't feel lonesome lady, many of the prisoners, themselves, are just as amazed at what they have written - **MERRY CHRISTMAS.**"

At this time, this Correspondent would like to express his **personal gratitude to the many incarcerated prisoners** throughout the State of Oregon, in jails and in prisons - without them this column could not have been possible.

And may the many "THANKS" go beyond these walls to the Oregon public for the many letters received by this Correspondent and his staff in support of "Behind the Walls," and proving those things called **Kindness, Concern, Love and Hope** in answer to prayers that through publication a better understanding and respect be known about "Thy Fellow Man!"

Merry Christmas Everybody!

To Those Who Have No One:

I have no one either this Christmas to send good wishes to. So I'm wishing you a Merry Christmas, and write anytime, so we will have someone next Christmas to say Merry Christmas to.
Elbert Wright #36415

To Gloria Franklin:

Merry Christmas to you and the children, Micky, Doe-Doe, and Tasha. Love and Good Wishes for you all during the coming year....
George Thomas #39719

To my Family:

I would like to toast this Christmas to my family - my wife, mother, son and father, and all other supporters of me. Without you there could be no me, you brighten up my day, Merry Christmas and happier New Years to come.
John L. Smith #34923

To my Sharon:

Of all the gifts I have ever received during the Christmas season the gift of your love this year has been and always will be the one most important to me, always, through each and every year.
Merry Christmas Darling,
Billy Whitmire #39007

To my Family:

Thanks for caring, Merry Christmas.
Richard D. Reinhart #36755

To my Family:

Thanks for making my stay here as pleasant as possible.
Barry A. Walker #39633

To my: Mother, sister, family, Pastor Oliver Baker, many friends, Andy, Polly, Dan, Wayne and Judy, Don and Helen, and many more - who stood by me, with love, in a most turbulent time of my life. Together we'll see that Romans 8:28 really works - Merry Christmas with Love.
Jim McHone #39399

Merry Christmas: To my Wife and Boys.

How I love you with all my heart and love my two boys, too.
Frank G. Wilson #38853

To Bev:

I wish you a Merry Christmas and a lot of joy in the coming New Year.
Gary Phillips #39792

Merry Christmas,

To my sweet loving wife and my four kids. Oh how I wish I could be there with you. God bless you with my lonely love, our day will come. Merry Christmas to you my darling. Merry Christmas to everybody.
Ralph A. Stevenson #39289

To Julie:

I'm thinking about you always and wish you a Merry Christmas and stay high and keep on jammin'.
Gary Finn #39274

To Thelma:

I'm still with you honey, with heart and soul, always forever. Merry Christmas.
Anthony Stone #39796

To my Dearest Wife Joyce:

It's fun now to remember the "falling-in-love" feelings, the will-she-call won't-she-nights, the "love-me, love-me-not" days; the kind that prove to be so filled with joy, it turns into a precious memory! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.
From your loving husband,
Fred Willoughby #38889

To my Sweet Friend Christiane:

I remember well the beautiful moments that we spent together, we're apart now Chris, but maybe if I'm fortunate I'll get to see you again. If not the precious memory of you will forever be in my mind. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.
From your friend,
Alan D. Cannon #39031

To Katy Hanson:

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you and the family. And may God give you and the family many great benediction in the near future. "Behold the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream saying, arise and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt."
Ricky L. Brothers #39277

To the Williams' family:

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas, sorry I can't be there.
Eddie L. Williams

To Vickie Lynn Hanna:

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, Honey - I wish you all the happiness in the world. Be a good little girl, and keep studying in school. Tell your mother, I wish same.
Victor Hanna #38814

To the Portland Metroplant Committee: To all the old gang who hung out at the Elk's Club:

Merry Christmas - everybody! Happy New Year, hope you have many, many more.
W.D. Norris #36049

To Mrs. Lauder milk:

If you have the joy of Jesus in your heart to stay you can say with smiles and gladness Merry Christmas day.
From,
Vernell Lauder milk #39320

To Mosa:

With all my love on Christmas.
From Daddy,
Edmond Davis Kizer #39422

To my Mother and Father:

I wish you a very Merry Christmas and may God protect you through my prayers.
Alfred Alexander #35385

To my Wonderful Mother:

I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.
Henry Elizer #39478

To Alice, my brother Willie, and my daughter MyJon:

I wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!
Johnny L. Polite #38555

To my Loving Wife, Carole and son Keys:

Even though circumstances keep us apart, have a very Merry Christmas and a Joyous New Year. The love in our hearts is stronger than time.
Stephen K. Miller #39313

To Everybody:

Although I don't have anybody at all to write to or even a family, I just want to wish everybody a Merry Christmas.
Walter JoHanson #35527

I have no one in the state, but I wish everyone a Merry Christmas.
Leon L. Phillips #39627

May a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, for all and may God bless you.
Burt N. Hall #39671

Marie:

The Christmas spirit is but a dream to me now here in prison. But that doesn't change the wish to be with you this year and wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Kiss the kids for me.
Kenneth R. Bethune #38845

Ollie and Helen:

This is the "Nation" from whence I came. My family, enjoy this joy for illusion, and may it allow you clearer understanding of your universal being. Recognize that all things possess beauty, even illusions. With these thoughts in mind I will you to enjoy this Holiday known and called Christmas, and may the New Year bring you universal Peace within!
Larry R. Westbrook #38654

Nancy:

Christmas time is wishing time, so here's my wish for you. Peace and health and happiness, today and all year through.
Calvin Hamrick #37095

Mom and Dad:

I know this is the time for love and happiness, so at this time I'm wishing the whole family a lot of togetherness and many more Christmas's to come and a Happy New Year!! I love you and miss you.
Jerome Ivory #38978

Michele:

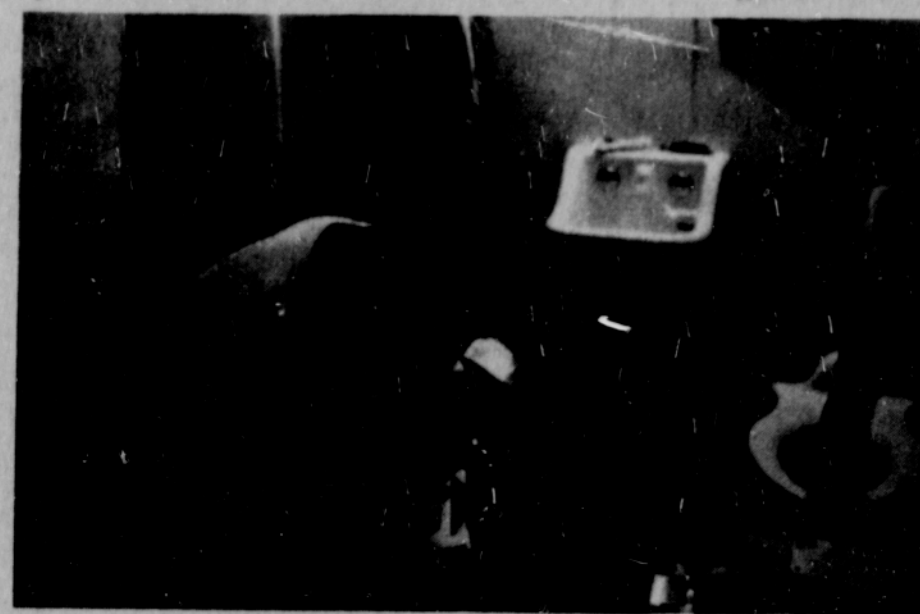
Yes my pretty the Lord has brought us together and our future is in his hands. I wish you a Merry Christmas.
James E. Gray #37764

To the People of Oregon:

My nearest friends and relatives live far away, but I would like to take this opportunity to wish all the people of this State of Oregon a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.
Julian Joseph Bekesz #37390

To the People of the Ark of Safety Church of God Pentecostal:

I wish all a very warm and cheerful Christmas and New Year, and that you are receiving all the good things that God has to offer. Also Mary Golden and Betty Odom, I say you are two sweet ladies.
Spencer LaRue Peterson #39288



A lonely prisoner writes a letter home.

To Janie:

Love and happiness all through the year.
William Farmer #37825

To my Wife Betty and Jimmy Dexter and everyone. I am very sorry that I will not be home with all my family, but I wish you all a Happy Christmas and I hope to be home soon.
Francis Pilgrim #39804

To Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Groover Sullivan, the Vance's, Jerry J. Dyal and family. Best of greetings and Happy Holidays.
Kenneth H. Vance #39802

To my Wife and Family:

Hope all of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. To all - Laverne, Kay, Karyn, Jan, Ricky, Jay, Lee, Kip, Dee, Stephen, Nicolai Johnson.
J.J. Johnson, Jr. #39808

To all the Black Sisters in Portland:

I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I love you all!!
Ray Charles Maple, President of UHURU #37156

To Mrs. Caroline Baker and Tamaka Baker:

May this Christmas be the last one we spend without each other.
Guy Leonard Baker #39600

To my Jamil on Christmas, who I long to be with on this day. With all the love for them.
Love,
Vincent L. Jones #38665

To my family on Christmas, may all of you keep the faith. Not only on Christmas, but every day, while true knowledge, true understanding, true wisdom, for I surely love you all, for our happiness will grow even more when we are all together.
Love,
Reginald I. Cox #38332

To Mary Galloway:

Bless you and your family.
From,
L. Dart #39807

To James Rhoades:

Still awaiting your response!
Merry Christmas,
Skillful Davis #36651

To my Family:

A Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.
Love,
Harold Gauetty #39694

To Sharon, Sunday "Mike":

May we enter from the essence of this world into the next. Merry Christmas.
Love Dad,
Arlo Jones #38988

To all the People of the State of Oregon:

I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Please write me anytime.
Thank You,
Robert Mouquedra #38645

To Opal and Family:

May you have a nice Christmas and let us all look forward to the coming year.
Love,
Floyd O. Thomas #39813



To the Breidenback and Miles Families:

My thoughts will be of you on Christmas, give Darlynn my love too.
God Bless You,
Love Frank and Dad

Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. To my best friend, a pretty and very considerate lady, Martha Kelley.
Thomas Adair #39801

To my Mom and Dad:

Hoping for you to have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year for at least 20 more years.
Love You Always,
Charles Ptarch #39777

To my Mother and Father:

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. From your loving son.
James Todd #39784

From those of us that cannot bring Seasons Greetings in person, may we send best wishes for health, love and happiness to all, forever more, Happy Holidays.
Clayton L. Keene #38441

To Venus and J.J.:

I wish you the best of season's greetings, and the best for the coming year.
Larry Nelson #38051

To Linda White:

May this Christmas bring you all the joy and happiness possible.
Michael Nugent #32543

To Frances Howard:

I wish you the best during these holidays and may the sun shine for you always!
One Who Loves You,
Henry George #34751

My Pes:

I am sending this wish for Christmas and my love knowing we cannot write or visit. I hope this note reaches you so you'll still know I love you, my wife of life.
Verne Ray Boley #39310

To the Wesson Family of Portland, Oregon:

I, Claude S. Wesson, have taken the time out to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May peace abound in your small company.
With True Brotherly Love,
Claude S. Wesson

To all my Christian Brothers and Sisters, and especially to Judy, my love; let's remember this season the words of Jesus - "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me."
Much Love to You,
Johnny Schrock #36337

To Tina Morrow:

Merry Christmas to you and the family, wish you happiness throughout the year.
Gary Nebergall #39779

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