

Christmas Observed In Many Ways In Different Sections Of The World

Although universal in its spirit and purpose, Christmas is observed in many different ways throughout the world.

Individual countries have acquired literally thousands of customs through the ages. Some have been discarded along the way, while others are still observed.

In Mexico, for example, breaking the "Pinata," an earthenware jug filled with fruits, nuts and candies is still an important Christmas custom. Blindfolded children armed with sticks try to break it open. When they succeed, all join in the scramble for the "goodies" that pour out.

In the Northland of Canada, the Eskimos have a unique Christmas custom. Entire Eskimo communities set off to visit neighboring towns. The following year the visit is repaid and the visiting town becomes the host.

In Finland, all members of Finnish families must take a steam bath before the festivities of Christmas Eve can begin.

In Yugoslavia, the Christmas celebration is centered around the Yule log. A young tree is felled and brought into the house before sunrise on Christmas morning. While burning, it is struck with an iron rod causing sparks to fly up the chimney. Tradition says that blessings as numerous as the sparks will fall on the family during the coming year.

In Greece, special loaves of bread are baked for the Christmas celebration. Each loaf is

marked with a cross on top; a silver coin concealed in each. According to custom, the person finding the coin is destined for a prosperous year.

In India, one week before the holiday, all villages that observe Christmas, fast by not eating animal food. On the last day they eat no food at all until they take communion on Christmas Eve.

Probably the most universal custom associated with Christmas is sending Christmas cards.

For a custom that is so well established all over the world, it is relatively new, however—just over a century old.

It was in 1843 that the first Christmas card was published in England by Sir Henry Cole,

who commissioned an artist named John Horsley to design a Christmas "greeting" for him because he was too busy to write to his friends at Christmas.

Since then, the sending of Christmas cards has become almost universal, although in some countries greetings are sent for the New Year, instead of Christmas.

This year, more than three billion Christmas cards will be mailed in the United States, alone, says the Rust Craft Greeting Card Company. This is an average of approximately 15 cards per person.

Even Santa Claus takes on different forms and comes at different times in certain countries.

In Spain, he bears his traditional gifts on Jan. 6, the feast of the Epiphany which celebrates the arrival of the Three Wise Men. Spanish children fill their shoes with straw for the camels of the Wise Men, and place them on the window sills. Similarly, in Holland, children place their wooden shoes filled with hay in a corner or a ledge, but it's for Santa's white horse.

In Germany, Santa wears a big chain which he rattles at the door. Candy and cookies go to the good youngsters, the bad ones get empty potato sacks.

In Italy, Santa comes as an old woman on a broomstick. She is named La Befana, and leaves gifts in the children's shoes.

PAGE—2 HERALD AND NEWS, Klamath Falls, Oregon Thursday, November 28, 1963



'Personal' Card Trend Is Growing

"Personalized" Christmas greetings will account for a very sizable portion of the more than three billion Christmas cards that will be sent in the United States this year, says the Rust Craft Greeting Card Company.

The dozens of attractive sample albums for 1962 with cards specially designed to be imprinted with the sender's names offer an almost inexhaustible source of personal Christmas cards for every taste.

In addition to modern and traditional treatments of the familiar Christmas symbols and sentiments, there are "family style" illustrations, designs depicting various hobbies and activities, humorous cards, cut out novelty numbers that can be used as Christmas tree ornaments, and cards tailored to the needs of business firms.

One of the oldest and most cherished customs of the Christmas season, the sending of personalized greetings date back to the days when the family coachman toured Beacon Hill in Boston to leave two of his employers a beautifully engraved calling card on the silver tray in the hallways of friends and relatives.

Holiday Road Tips

NEW YORK (NEA) — Christmas holidays mean that a lot more people will be driving. Increased traffic and cold weather call for extra safety precautions.

Here are some tips that can mean happier motoring:

—Be sure your car's brakes, tires, lights, steering, windshield wiper and horn are functioning properly. In fact, these items should be checked regularly throughout the year.

—Rear wheels should have snow tires or chains.

—When driving up a hill that is wet from rain or covered with ice or hard-packed snow, gain speed and use a high gear. If the wheels start to spin, ease back on the throttle.

—Try to avoid sudden stops on ice or snow-bound roads. Brake gently and smoothly.

—On a steep downgrade, start very slowly. To help prevent skidding, step on the brake pedal several times—lightly.

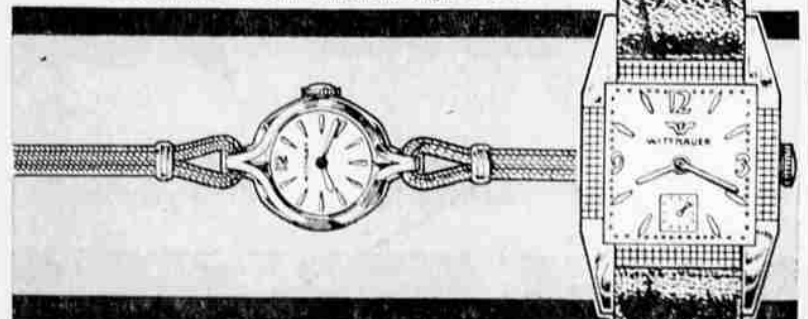
—Keep packages off the back shelf, where they can be dangerous in case of a sudden stop.

—If you are taking a long trip, give yourself plenty of time and plan your route carefully. Don't forget emergency items—spare tires, flares, flashlight, jack, first aid kits and so forth.

And, of course, don't forget the safe driving ABC's that should be followed the year 'round: Obey all traffic regulations, don't speed, don't tailgate, and always signal properly and in plenty of time.

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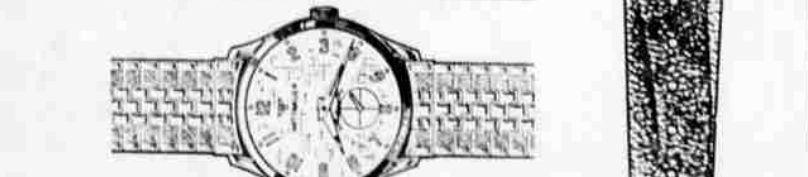


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