



Many thanks to those who submitted photos, stories, recipes, and pictures for the Holiday issue. We couldn't do it without you! We hope that all of you enjoy this special issue and have a wonderful holiday season.

*~Sherry, Keith, & Fredda
In Touch Editors*



Christmas Snow...

Every year there are holiday cartoon favorites galore featured on TV. The one I love best is *Frosty the Snowman*.

I do not know what year it was first broadcast, but I do know it makes me happy and a little sad to watch it. The child-like music, the colorful characters, and the uplifting lesson provide a warm and fuzzy association in my memory. I used to watch it with my twin daughters but they are now grown and on their own. My grandson lives in suburban Atlanta and my husband is usually on the computer at night. So this year I watched it with Holly and Peeky, the two dogs, to keep me company and loved it just the same.

Frosty, you know, is made out of Christmas snow. And everyone knows that Christmas snow never disappears. It soaks into the ground to help the trees and flowers grow and continue the cycle of life.

Growing up in the city of Rochester, New York, there was plenty of snow to make a snowman or two each winter. There were usually some old leaves rolled up with the packed snow. Rocks served as the nose and eyes. After moving to rural New Concord, Ohio, there was plenty of snow and real coal for the eyes and nose because I lived on what was called a coal haul road. In fact, I still have a large piece of onyx-black coal that I use as a paperweight. Since moving to South Carolina in 1980, I have experienced a few good snows but the whole family had to get out in the yard early to make a snowman very quickly. By noon the snow was melted but our southern Frosty usually lasted at least a day. Acorns were used for the eyes and nose. I remember hunting for the camera to take a photo so we could tell our extended family we were able to make a snowman...

So, here's to Frosty the jolly happy soul! You make life merry and bright for kids of all ages. And that magic Christmas Snow, well let's hope it comes around this year so all of us can catch some magic of our own. Thumpty, thump, thump...

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

~Submitted by Betty Cook



Here is a picture of our old cat, Spot. Animals have always been a huge part of our lives...and at Christmas, they were always at their best! Spot is relaxing in the leftover wrapping paper! One Christmas, we put a pair of antlers on our dog Brewster...but he really got his feelings hurt when we all started laughing at him! From that year on, Brewster was always traumatized by Christmas! But we gave him lots of chewies to soothe his nerves!

~Submitted by Anne Grant



What can I tell you? We have been a family, just like everyone with family traditions that will have to be reinvented now that we've left Mississippi. Mary Darby comes home to SC from USM on Saturday and we are in the midst of unpacking and moving into the new house. In the past, we would spend the holidays seeing friends. We had a tradition of inviting a small group over for brunch on Christmas Eve...eggs benedict, cheese grits, grapefruit & avocado, bloody marys and milk punch! Same meal every year, and it was great fun. Church that evening, then Christmas day was always fairly quiet. We usually cooked something different and fun..non traditional Christmas food..and lounged around the day.

This year, it will be quiet, and we will be counting our blessings in a new place.

Merry Christmas,
~Kay Wall

Back row: my husband Lebo, then daughter Ginny Foxworth and her husband Forrest, then Justin McGuffee (Mary Darby's boyfriend)
Front row. me, son Leavell who lives here with us, and daughter Mary Darby.



What is Christmas? It is tenderness for the past, courage for the present, hope for the future. It is a fervent wish that every cup may overflow with blessings rich and eternal, and that every path may lead to peace. (Agnes M. Pharo)

As I celebrate my 6th Christmas at the Libraries, I'm truly thankful that our paths were meant to cross, that I've had the opportunity to get to know all of you in some way, and for all the joys, sadness, discouragements, and encouragements we've weathered together. As the New Year soon begins, my prayer is that it will be one of the very best for each of you filled with happiness, good health, and love. I look forward to sharing it with you!

~Submitted by Joyce Peebles

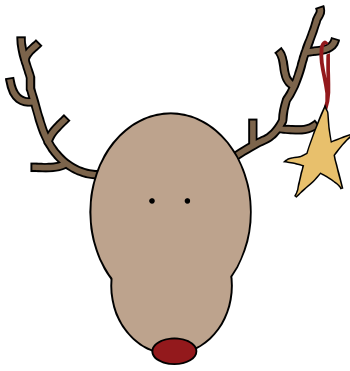


Sherry Volrath's dog, Abby pictured with Santa. (She's not actually smiling, but is having a panic attack!!!)

Keith Good is pictured here with his wife, Sarah and Christmas Tigger during their recent honeymoon at Disney World. And although Keith points out that he is wearing an Ohio State shirt, it is a picture with a **Tiger**, so hopefully that balances out collegiately.



My pets have always been a very special part of my family. And thanks to a dear friend each one has a place on my Christmas tree.



A few years ago my husband's cousin and his wife, Janet, were visiting us and Janet offered to hand paint Christmas ornaments of my pets. Janet has painted slate plaques for many of us Helsels so I knew what good work she did. A few months later lovely hand-painted ornaments arrived. That turned out to be Janet's first installment. Her mistake was ever visiting me again.

With each succeeding visit I seemed to have collected another animal. I have never purposely gotten a cat but I do rescue them from dire circumstances or take in relatives' cats (my elder son went to the Navy, and I got 2 cats; my Mom passed away, and I got 2 cats). I've even had a neighbor's cat move in, unnoticed. Jackson, who lived two houses away with a perfectly lovely owner, learned how to come in through our cat door and completely settled in with my family. I didn't realize it for a couple of months; he looked just like Bunny, one of my other cats. By the time I found out about the imposter he was securely entrenched in my family and the neighbor was willing to relinquish ownership. But just to make the situation clear, I always referred to Jackson as 'not my cat'. That didn't bother him a bit. Janet visited and there were new Christmas ornaments.

The dogs were another matter. In 1999 we decided to get a dog after a long time without one so Sugar joined the family; then Spice came to be her friend a couple of years later. And Janet visited again and again there were new Christmas ornaments.

This past summer my younger son moved to Denver and couldn't have a cat where he lived, so I took in Fluffy; and Janet visited. Realizing what a new cat meant Janet took several pictures of Fluffy to get on with the project. During their visit, however, Janet got a call to come home because her father was on his deathbed. I rather assumed that Fluffy would have to make do without a Christmas ornament, but yesterday it arrived in the mail. It was so very thoughtful of Janet to remember me (and Fluffy) with everything that's been going on in her life the past few months.

Janet not only paints a great likeness of the pets, she also paints decorations and greetings on the ornaments, and personalizes them. Each one has the pet's name; Jackson's ornament also says 'Not My Cat'.

For most people getting out Christmas decorations each year brings back great memories. We all have Christmas things that we especially cherish because they have been in the family for a while or were gifts from loved ones. My pet ornaments are my favorite decorations. I especially treasure the ornaments of my pets that are no longer with us.

I grouped the ornaments together to show up better in the accompanying picture. But when I decorate the tree I hang them all over. Part of the fun for my grandchildren every year is finding each one of the pets.

I also treasure Janet's visits. But maybe next year I'll visit her.

~Submitted by Beth Helsel



The Alexander family celebrates Christmas at the Rocky Bottom Conference Center, a camp for blind children, nestled north of Highway 11. It's a beautiful retreat with a "cabin" that sleeps 30+ people. That's why I use the term cabin loosely. A huge great room with a conference style kitchen and many bedrooms – most with four bunk beds. It works perfectly for my large family. I am the oldest of six children with 10 nieces and nephews with 2 spouses. I've just recently learned that I'll be a great aunt next summer. My daughter Misha and her husband Josh will join us from Knoxville, TN. No grandkids for me yet but I hold out hope.

See the enclosed photograph from Rocky Bottom 2005. (This year was a special year for us since it's our 10th year at the camp!) Notice my niece Jill, who is wearing the t-shirt from "that other university". She works over at Schilletter in a special work program and wears gamecock t-shirts under her work clothes!

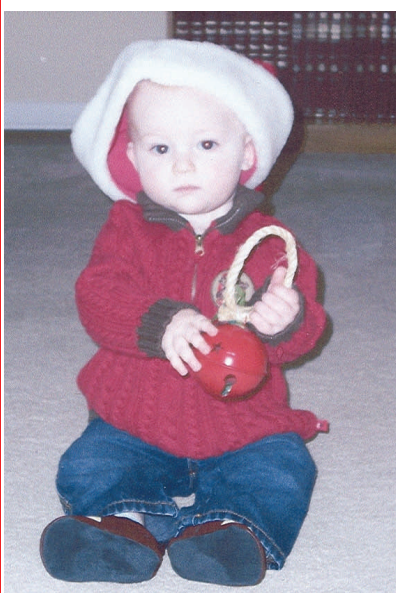
Hope you enjoy your holidays as much as we do!
~Submitted by Teri Alexander



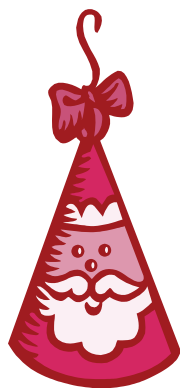
Holiday Tips from Tabitha Wright

- Spend 15 minutes each day getting ready for Christmas
- Make or designate a holiday calendar
- Start a master gift list and a Christmas Card List
- Arrange for family photo sessions for holiday gifts or Christmas cards
- Schedule carpet cleaning NOW! As the holidays approach, business picks up. Call now for your choice of appointment times.
- Buy postage stamps for cards and Christmas cards or supplies for Christmas letters.

Claralita Davis pictured in a very cute holiday photo from December of 1963.



Pictured here is Brandon Nixon, son of Chris and Angela Nixon, celebrating his first Christmas.



A favorite picture of Candy Herron's childhood Christmas!



My favorite time of year was always Christmas morning & watching the look on my son's face. Even though he is married now, he will always be my Baby Boy! But now I have a Baby Girl to love as well!
This is my Son Brian & his wife Lori (my baby girl).

~Submitted by Vickie Gibbs



Happy Belated Poinsettia Day! (December 12th)

These beautiful flowers are recognized as a symbol of Christmas. Poinsettia Day was pronounced as an Act of Congress. It is in honor of Joel Roberts Poinsett, who died on December 12, 1851. Poinsett was the first Ambassador to Mexico who brought the plant back to his plantation in the U.S. He grew the plants in his Greenville, S.C plantation and gave them out as gifts to friends.

In Mexican folklore, there is a story of a little poor girl who had nothing to bring to church for Christmas.

On her way to church, she picked some plants by the side of the road. As she entered the church, the ends of the leaves turned into bright, brilliant red flowers. You guessed it... Poinsettias.

~Submitted by Kim Gillespie



Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays
from the Circulation Gang!



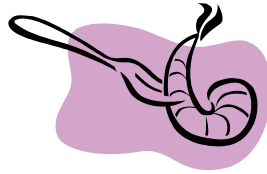
Tasty Bites...

Shrimp Dip

~Submitted by Rosanne Maw

- 3 cans Campbell Cream of Shrimp soup
- 1 large carton (1 lb.) sour cream
- 1 8 oz. package cream cheese
- 1 or 2 loafs of Italian bread cut into cubes
- Party toothpicks

Mix all ingredients together in a sauce pan and heat on low until cream cheese is melted. The mixture can then be placed in a crock pot (on low) or put in a bread bowl for serving. Guests can then dip the bread cubes in the mixture and enjoy. This is very, very good!



(Sticky Fingers Restaurant)

Savannah Dip

(You can hurt yourself on this one!)

~Submitted by Sherry Volrath



- 100z packages of frozen Souffer's cream spinach
- 1 1/2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1/2 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 cup artichoke hearts, quartered
- 1/2 tsp. garlic powder

Thaw spinach. Combine all ingredients in a bowl and mix. Bake in a 9"x 9" casserole dish at 375* for 20 minutes. Serve with a side of salsa and nacho chips. (I think this is best served warm).



Spanish Shortbread (or Mantecados)

~Submitted by Lisa Davis

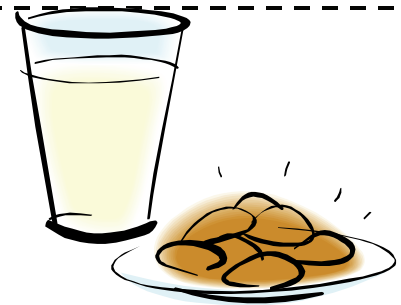
These cookies can be flavored with Anise, but we don't care much for the licorice flavor. My grandma always used lemon, cinnamon and almond flavoring or ground almonds. We make these at Christmas in her memory. These are really good with hot tea or hot chocolate.

- 3 1/3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup lard (yes, LARD! softened)
- 1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
- 2 large egg yolks
- 1 lemon (grated zest&,juice)
- 2 cups finely ground almonds

Preheat oven to 325. Grease four cookie sheets. Sift flour, and salt into a large bowl. Beat the Lard and sugar into a second large bowl with an electric mixer at high speed until creamy. Add the egg yolks, beating until well blended. Mix in the dry ingredients and lemon zest. Stir in the ground almonds and lemon juice until well blended. Turn out onto a lightly floured counter top and knead to form a smooth dough.

Cover with parchment paper, and roll out the dough about 1/4 inch thick. Remove paper, and using a small round cookie cutter, cut out 40 cookies. Use a spatula and transfer to prepared cookie sheets, placing them about an inch apart.

Bake, one batch at a time for 20 minutes. Lower the temperature to 300 and bake for 4-8 minutes, or until lightly golden. Cool on cookie sheets for about 1 minute, and transfer to a cooling rack. They will last for up to a week and will break down or crumble after that. Wrap tightly or store in an airtight container until use.



Yummy Cream Cheese Bars

~Submitted by Sherry Volrath

- 2 Cans Crescent Rolls
- 1/2 Cup of Sugar
- 1 Tbsp Lemon Juice
- 16oz. Cream Cheese, softened
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 Egg white, beaten
- 1/4 cup of pecan chips

Directions:

Spray a 9x13 pan with non-stick cooking spray. Spread one can of rolls to cover bottom of pan, pressing the seams of the rolls together. Mix the sugar, lemon juice, vanilla, and cream cheese with a mixer until well blended. Spread over rolls. Then cover with the 2nd can of crescent rolls. Brush with egg whites, sprinkle with nuts (lightly press nuts into the surface). Bake at 350* for 30-35 minutes. May cool and put in to fridge for easier cutting. Cut into bars, and serve!

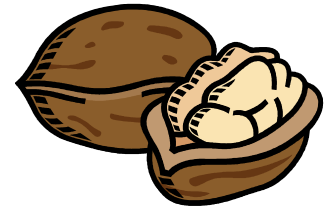


“Just Kissed” Walnuts

~Submitted by Tabitha Wright

Serves 2

- 1 cup bittersweet chocolate chips
- 10-15 walnut halves
- Parchment paper



Melt bitter chocolate in a double boiler or microwave.

Remove chocolate from heat and let cool for five minutes.

Dip one-half of the walnut piece into the chocolate.

Lay dipped nut on parchment paper until cool and set (about one hour).

Holiday Eggnog

~Submitted by Tabitha Wright

- 6 eggs, separated
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 2/3 cup powdered (instant dissolving/berry sugar)
- 1 cup milk
- 2 1/2 cups light cream
- 1 cup rum or brandy
- 1 1/4 cups whipping cream
- freshly grated nutmeg



In large bowl, beat together egg whites and salt until frothy. Gradually beat in half the sugar, beating until stiff peaks form. In large bowl, beat egg yolks until light in color. Gradually add remaining sugar and beat until thickened and lemon colored. Whisking constantly, gradually add light cream, milk and rum. In chilled bowl, whip whipping cream until soft peaks form. Fold whipped cream, then beaten egg whites into egg mixture. CHILL. Just before serving, sprinkle with nutmeg. Makes about 12 servings.

Hamburger Dip

~Submitted by Candy Herron

1st layer

- 1 pound hamburger
- 16 ounce Picante sauce
- 1 envelope onion soup mix
- Brown hamburger 1/2 way done. Drain and add onion soup and brown the rest of the way. Add sauce and let simmer. Pour in to a rectangle casserole dish.

2nd layer

- 8 ounces of cream cheese
- 8 ounces sour cream

Mix together and spread over layer 1 in the casserole dish. Cook for 35 minutes at 350 degrees. Add 16 ounces of grated cheese to the top and cook for another 10 minutes until bubbly. Serve with tortilla chips.



Happy Holidays from Steve Johnson!

<http://badaboo.free.fr/merryxmas.swf>

Crazy Crust Apple Pie

~Submitted by Fredda Meador

- 1 cup self- rising flour
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 stick butter (softened – NOT MELTED)
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/2 teaspoon Cinnamon
- 3/4 cup water (approximately)
- 1 can apples (Comstock brand)

Using your hand, mix the first six ingredients in a deep baking dish then (still using your hand), add enough of the water to make the mixture like a thick batter.

Pour the canned Comstock brand apples on top of the thick batter.

Put in a 400-degree oven and bake until golden brown.

(The batter will rise and engulf the apples, causing this to look like apple cobbler.)



Wassil

~Submitted by Tabitha Wright

You will need:

- One bottle inexpensive red wine
- Cloves
- 1 orange
- mulling spices
- crockpot or coffee
- coffee filter
- stapler

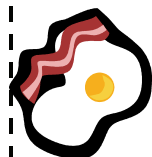
Directions: Insert cloves into orange, point inward. Cover orange completely leaving only about 1/2 inch between each clove. Fill paper coffee filter with mulling spices. Staple the edges together to form a pouch of mulling spices. Pour wine into crockpot or coffee urn. Be careful, red wine stains even ceramic. Turn device on a low or medium setting. Place clove-stuffed orange and mulling spice pouch in wine. Let it get hot, stirring all the while. Serve in heat tolerant cups/mugs. For a great aroma, prepare a couple of hours before company



Easy Wassail

~Submitted by Tabitha Wright

- 2 cinnamon sticks (3-inches each)
- 12 whole cloves
- 12 whole allspice
- Cut four 4-inch squares of cheesecloth. Divide the spices between double-layers of cheesecloth squares. Knot into a bundle.
- Tie one bundle onto a 2-quart bottle of apple cider, cranberry, or pineapple juice.
- Attach the following label: Pour juice into a large saucepan. Toss in the cheesecloth spice bag. Bring to a boil over medium heat. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 20 minutes. Remove spice bundle and serve hot. Makes 8 cups.



Breakfast Casserole

(You can make this up the night before & just pop it in the oven on Christmas morning!)

~Submitted by Sherry Volrath

- 6 eggs
- 1 pound sausage
- 1 cup cheddar cheese, grated
- 2 cups milk
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon mustard
- 6-8 slices bread

Spray a 9X13 inch pan with Pam. Cut up bread in squares and cover bottom of pan. Brown sausage until crumbly. Sprinkle sausage over bread. Sprinkle cheese over sausage. Beat eggs, milk and salt (could add some chives and thyme also). Pour over sausage and cheese, cover and place in refrigerator over night. Next morning bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

(You can use bacon or ham in place of the sausage if you like.)

Serves 6-8

