

The many faces of Santa

Santa Claus hasn't been sliding down our chimneys forever. And he hasn't always been known as Santa Claus.

He started out as Saint Nicholas, a thin, rather saintly old soul in flowing golden bishop's robes with a pointed hat. He rode a variety of animals or just walked carrying an evergreen branch, the symbol of eternal life. He also gave out twigs from a sacred grove for good luck.

Dutch immigrants in the 1600s brought the tradition to America, and St. Nicholas became Santa Claus on a white horse bearing gifts for children.

In the early 1800s Christmas traditions from other countries, like Father Christmas from England and Kris Kringle from Germany, began to mix with that of Jolly old Santa Claus. American author Washington Irving first illustrated the merging in 1809 in

a series of stories about a pipe-smoking patron saint who rode a horse-drawn wagon through the sky and brought presents to children.

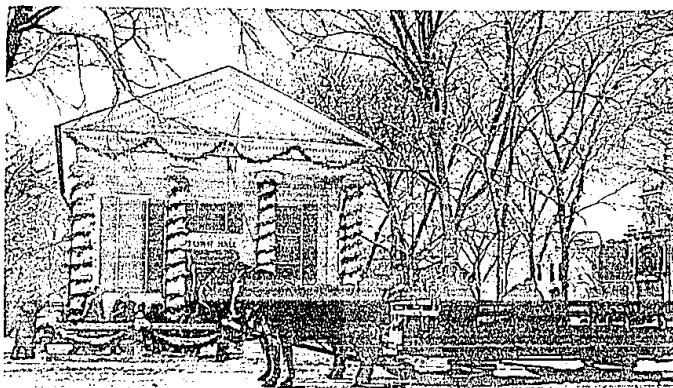
In 1822, Dr. Clement Moore wrote a little poem for his children about a jolly elf who now drove a sleigh with eight tiny reindeer and America's image of Santa was established. Nonetheless people still pictured him in a variety of ways. Sometimes he was tall and thin, or he might come dressed in buckskins.

THE FAMOUS political cartoonist Thomas Nast looked in our final physical image of the patron saint of Christmas with a series of pen and ink drawings for Harper's weekly in the late 1800s. By this time, too, Americans were cheerfully mispronouncing the Dutch mispronunciation of "St. Nicholas" as "Santa Claus."

The Coca Cola Co. added the final touch to our image of Santa Claus, and that was color. In a series of ads done for the company in the early 1900s, Santa got his rosy cheeks and red suit trimmed with white fur. That was also the beginning of the commercialization of Christmas. People were already able to purchase mass-produced Christmas decorations and gifts, and Santa began to appear in ads selling everything from soap to cigarettes.

From his beginnings in church lore and folk literature to his profitable career as salesman, the pervasive presence of Santa Claus brings the Christmas spirit to many people throughout the world.

Santa Claus in all his many forms can be seen at Henry Ford Museum this Holiday season through Jan. 5.



"Christmas Past" is the theme for Greenfield Village this month with lavish decorations, Christmas ornaments blown from glass or made from walnut shells, cookies made on woodburning stoves, candles and desserts made from mid-19th century recipes. Children are invited to play

with antique reproduction toys in the general store while music comes from antique gramophones and families can have their pictures taken in the Tintype Studio. And of course the horse-drawn sleigh is waiting for visitors to jump on outside of Town Hall.

club circuit

FARMINGTON HILLS SENIOR ADULT CENTER will have the cameras ready to take "Discount Pictures" at 10 a.m. Friday in Mercy Center complex, 11 Mile, east of Middlebelt, through Gate 4. The pictures will be transferred on to cards which allows the bearer discounts on goods and services through cooperating merchants in Oakland County.

At 10:30 a.m. that day seniors are in-

ited to sit in on a beauty make-over. The center will be closed Dec. 24, 25 and 31.

The seniors' New Year's Eve Party starts at 1 p.m. Friday, Dec. 27. Seniors are invited to bring a treat to place on the festive table and then dance to the music of Farmington Hills' Senior Adult Band. Admission is \$1 at the door.

The calendar of events for January is printed in The Senior Messenger which can be picked up in the center for the asking.

TOASTMASTERS, Wind Bagger Chapter, meets at 5:45 p.m. every Thursday in Sweden House, 31530 Grand River. Guests are welcome to make reservations with Phyllis Sullivan, 455-1635.

BIRMINGHAM-BLOOMFIELD-TROY SINGLES host a Christmas Dance Party Friday from 7:30 p.m. to 1:30 a.m. in Glen Oaks Country Club, 13 Mile Road west of Middlebelt. Music for dancing is furnished by Eddie Rogers of WDTX Radio.

Guests are welcomed. Admission is \$5 at the door which includes hors d'oeuvres and a chance for door prizes.

OAKLAND COUNTY YOUNG REPUBLICANS host a Christmas Dance Party which begins at 9 p.m. in Procks, 1019 W. Maple, between Coolidge and Crooks Road. Admission is \$3 at the door.

The group's hotline number is 543-5757.

All club news and announcements for this column are to be addressed to: Club Circuit, Farmington Observer, 33203 Grand River, Farmington 48024. The information must arrive before noon on Monday before Thursday publication.

4-H Cookbooks on sale

"Savor It," the new Michigan 4-H Cookbook, is on sale, filled with recipes from Oakland County 4-H members and leaders.

"The cookbooks contain recipes in 14 categories, including holiday specialties, microwave recipes, appetizers, main and side dishes, snacks and brunches," said Thomas Schneider, Oakland County 4-H youth agent. "It's a unique cookbook because it contains recipes from Michigan 4-H families and also features special information such as low salt and low sugar recipes, recipes kids love to make and eat, and a section on Michigan-grown fruits and vegetables."

Along with the Michigan 4-H recipes the favorite recipes from some rather

famous people, including Ronald and Nancy Reagan, James and Paula Blanchard, and MSU President John D. DiBiaggio and Carolyn DiBiaggio.

"It's interesting to see the many diverse recipes in the cookbook. At \$6.50, the books make excellent gifts," Schneider said.

The cookbooks also contain information about the history of 4-H, photos of Michigan 4-H participants in action, and sections on quantity cooking, nutrition, and measurement and metric information.

Proceeds from the sale of the cookbooks will benefit Michigan 4-H youth programs. To order, contact Oakland County 4-H office at 858-0889.

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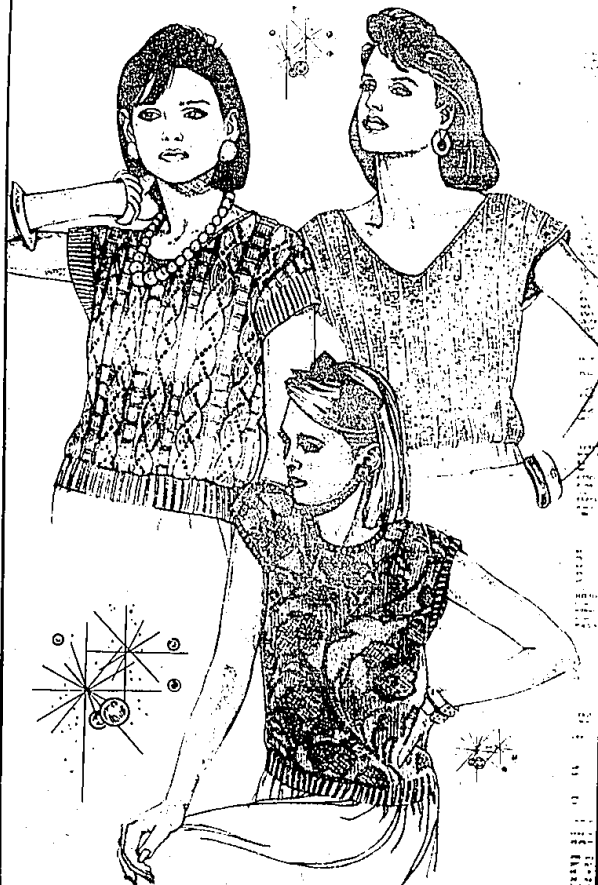
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