

EGB'S FLASH

A SPECIAL CHRISTMAS ISSUE-DECEMBER 2012



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BY 9th E & 9th F

DEAR SANTA

Adapted by Troi Lorena, 9th F

A few days before Christmas Eve Annie wrote the most unusual letter to Santa. She did not want to receive any present anymore, all she wanted was to apologize.

Dear Santa,

When I was a little girl, you helped me a lot. I had to behave myself all year (well, mostly November and December – your threats didn't work too well in July) so that you would visit. You stopped bringing me presents when I was 9. I hope you can understand that I kind of lost faith in you for a little while.

It began with the fact that we didn't even have a chimney. How would you get inside without a chimney? Then, I realized that you had the same handwriting and even used the same wrapping paper as my mom. She told me that you were so busy that you had enlisted her into your Christmas army. If it wasn't for her help and help from parents like her, there was no way that you could finish all that work in time for Christmas. I believed her for a little while, but eventually, I thought you were a sham.

Can you ever forgive me? You see, I had a lot going on in my life then. I didn't trust the people closest to me. I miss your visits. I miss the anticipation of Christmas Eve where I could hardly sleep because I was excited. I miss opening my eyes on Christmas morning and running downstairs to find that you had eaten the cookies we left out.

I threw you away. I cast aside the kindest, most magical person in the whole world, because I couldn't or just didn't want to believe. Well, I'd like to believe in you now, if that's alright. I know I'm a little old, but I'd like to believe in you.

Please, don't feel like you need to leave something at my house. Could you use one of my Christmases to visit the house of a kid like me instead? Tell that kid that it's alright to let his or her guard down, if only for one day a year. Tell them that there will be plenty of time for being an adult later on, but now, it's time to be a kid. It's ok to believe. Thanks for everything, Santa.

Love,
Annie.

SANTA CLAUS DOES NOT FORGET

Adapted by Tâmplaru Denis, 9th F

Danny was a very good boy. He was kind, obedient, truthful, and unselfish. He had, however, one great fault,—he always forgot to do things. No matter how important the thing, his answer always was, "I forgot.". If he was sent to the store in a great hurry, to get something for tea, he would return late, without the article, but with his usual answer. His father and mother talked the matter over, and decided to do something to make the little boy remember. Christmas was near, and Danny was busy making out a list of things which Santa Claus was to bring him. "Santa Claus may forget some of those things," said his mother. "He cannot," replied Danny; "for I shall write sled, and skates, and drum, and violin, and all the things on this paper. Then when Santa Claus goes to my stocking he will find the list." Christmas morning came, and Danny was up at dawn to see what was in his stocking. His mother kept away from him, for she knew what Santa Claus had done. Finally she heard him coming to her room. Slowly he opened the door and came towards her. He held in his hand a list much longer than the one he had made out. He put it in his mother's hand, while tears of disappointment fell from his eyes. "See what Santa Claus left for me...

His mother pretended to be curious. It was a list of all the things Danny had been asked to do for six months. At the end of all was written, "I FORGOT". Danny wept for an hour. Then his mother told him they were all going to grandpa's. Perhaps something might be growing there for him. It was very strange to Danny, but on grandpa's tree he found everything he had written on his list. Was he cured of his bad habit? Not all at once; but when his mother saw that he was particularly heedless she would say, "Remember, Santa Claus does not forget."



A CHRISTMAS MIRACLE

By Rus Patricia , 9th E

It was a day before Christmas. Tina and Mara were home alone. Well, not entirely. A retired old lady across the street had accepted to take care of them while their parents were away on business. Tina asked to her sister to write letters to Santa Claus.

‘Why? Anyway, Santa is not coming this year to us if our family will not be home in time for Christmas’, said Mara. However, Tina didn't believe what her sister said and she took a piece of paper and a pen and started writing:
*"Dear Santa Claus,
 Please, bring my mother and father home for Christmas to celebrate Christmas together.
 Love,
 Tina"*

She put the letter on the window sill and joined Mara in the living room. They decided to decorate the Christmas tree. Tina had taken some decorations and put them all over the tree. Mara had taken some candies and wrapped them to put them in the tree too. Finally, Mara put a golden star on top of the Christmas tree. They prayed that their parents would be home for Christmas and they would give many gifts.

The next morning, Mara was the first who woke up, so she went downstairs. When she arrived she saw her parents next to the Christmas tree. ‘Mom! Dad! I’m so happy you are home’, cried Mara happily.

‘Merry Christmas, sweetheart!’, said mother. ‘Did you think we would not be back home for Christmas?’, asked father. When Tina came downstairs a few moments later she could not believe her eyes. Her parents were home and under the Christmas tree there were lots of candies and toys. ‘Thank you, Santa!’ whispered Tina, and went to hug her family.

SAVING SANTA

By Mateş Cornelia, IX F

I woke up on Christmas morning but I was lazy and I wanted to stay in bed and not to do anything. Finally I went into the living room to see my presents under the Christmas Tree .When I arrived in the living room I noticed that the tree wasn't there. I was wondering what had happened, because I remembered that the day before it had been there. My parents were absent too.

I called my friends but no one answered, I didn't know where everyone was, so I tried to find out what was happening. I received a message that said that Santa Claus had been kidnapped by his brother, but I started to laugh because I didn't believe in Santa Claus. The message said that everybody had left to save him.

In the evening I tried to sleep, but I couldn't. I decided to save Santa Claus just like everybody, but I didn't know what I was doing. I had to go to the North Pole. I arrived in the North Pole and I saw Santa Claus's brother putting people in prison. I tried to slip out, but he grabbed my hand. He was telling everyone that Christmas would never come again. I was frightened, I did not know what to do or say. One thing was clear to me! I had to save Santa. Then I woke up in my room. Everything was the same it used to be, I ran downstairs and the Christmas tree, the presents and my parents were there.

I felt relieved and I realized that I had had just a bad dream. Till today I have been wondering what I could have done to save Santa. Perhaps...to believe in him?



WHAT'S CHRISTMAS TO ME

By Deac Ariana, 9th E

A few days before Christmas, I went to town to buy presents for my family. It was snowing heavily and I was excited to have everything prepared on time for Christmas day. After I had bought everything I needed, I sat down on a bench in the mall to arrange my shopping bags. There were lots of people at the mall, but a young girl caught my attention. She was poorly dressed, she had no shopping bag in her hand, and her eyes were really sad. She was standing in front of a gift shop and seemed lost in thought. I felt I had to talk to her and so I did. I asked her if I could help her in some way and she said yes. She asked me the most unusual question: 'What's Christmas to you?'



I started to tell her that Christmas is an annual commemoration of the birth of Jesus Christ and a widely observed holiday, celebrated generally on December 25 by billions of people around the world. Santa Claus has a special place in the hearts of children as they eagerly wait for the gifts that are distributed among the children of the world by Santa Claus.

The children keep empty shoes or empty containers and some of them even goes to

the extent of hanging a stocking from the ceiling of the house, so that it gets filled up with gifts brought by Santa Claus. She stopped me and asked me once again” ‘What’s Christmas to you?’ ‘

I didn’t know what to say at first, but then I told her that my family and I always spent Christmas together. My mother and I cook cakes and traditional food and my father with my little brother Alex, buy the Christmas tree, but we decorate it together. On Christmas Eve, my family and our friends meet. Daddy always dresses up into Santa Claus because the little children wait for Santa .When Santa Claus arrives kids start screaming and jumping into in his arms. We need sing some carols and after that Santa gives us the presents. It's so beautiful! The children play with their new toys and my friends and I watch Christmas movies. Christmas for me is a special holiday!

As I finished talking, the girl disappeared into thin air. I was really scared at the beginning but then I thought that the girl must have been a sort of messenger .Someone sent to make me ask what Christmas meant to me.



THE REAL GIFT

By Șufană Mădălina, 9th E

It is Christmas Eve. It's snowing peacefully and snowflakes seem to dance in the air. The whole city is decorated in red and green and the whole atmosphere is incredibly beautiful. My house smells like pine scent and I am waiting for Santa Claus because I asked him to bring me a new mobile phone. Is this the only reason? I don't know.

I'm looking out of the window and I notice a little boy standing in front of my neighbors' porch. He is shivering from cold and he looks lost. I open the window and call him to come in. He tells me that he is an orphan and his desire is to find a family to love him. My parents decide to ask him to stay with us for Christmas and then to help him find a family. We give him food and new clothes and we treat him as if he is a member of our family. He's like the brother I have always wanted.

On Christmas day I run downstairs eager to meet everyone and to my surprise my new brother is not there. Before I manage to ask my parents about him my parents ask me if I want to have a little brother. They tell me that they would like to adopt a little boy if I agree with them. Moments of silence follow. I don't know if I should tell them about the little orphan, I don't know if the little orphan really exists. I finally say "yes" without adding anything else.

Years have passed since that Christmas and my little brother-the boy my parents adopted -has been with us ever since. In fact, he was my Christmas gift, the gift I didn't dare to ask Santa. As for the mobile phone I wanted? I can't remember it.



MY CHRISTMAS

By Varga Claudia, 9th E

To me Christmas means happiness, love and generosity. This is the best time of the year because it brings family and friends together.

A few days before Christmas we all start to work. Decorating for Christmas is so funny. Father always decorates the outside of the house with wonderful, colored lights and my mom and I decorate the inside, the rooms and the Christmas tree. Then all my family help mother with the cookies, making different shapes like angels, hearts, stars and so on.

Soon it's Christmas Eve. We are all together, mom and dad, uncle and aunt, grandmother and grandfather, cousins. We admire all the beautiful decorations, eat all the food we had prepared before, and of course, we listen to carols. I think carols are one of the greatest charms of this season which exudes a warmth spirit, love and joy. Another charm is represented by the gifts we all receive. This moment is the most exciting, especially for children. We chose carefully the present for our family, friends or poor people. It is a pleasure when you give a present and then you can see how happy and impressed that person is. Christmas has a magic power which makes us better and kinder.



SANTA CLAUS IS COMING

By Iuhasz Andreea, 9th F

One winter morning, Susan woke up at seven o'clock. She ran to the window to see if it was still snowing. It was December, 24th, a beautiful and magical day when everything was possible. Susan had a quick breakfast because she was very excited. She dressed up and went out with her friends to make a snowman. When she came back home, a beautiful Christmas Tree was standing in the living room waiting to be decorated. While her parents were bringing the decorations in the living room, Susan played some carols on the CD player –in tune with the Christmas spirit. Two hours later, the Christmas tree was ready.

The Christmas tree was decorated in gold and red. The atmosphere was beautiful. Outside in the street, some children were singing carols. "We wish a Merry Christmas", they sang. She loved very much the carols, so she was waiting to see if those children would come to sing at her house. But unfortunately, they didn't, so she started to feel upset.

Her grandmother and grandfather saw her and tried to comfort her but in vain. Two hours later, someone knocked at the door. The children she had heard previously did come to sing carols at her house eventually. When the boys finished,

Susan gave them some sweets. Soon, someone else knocked at the door. Susan went to see who it was.

"Ho, ho, ho! Merry Christmas!"

"Santa Claus! Wow!"

"Who is it, darling?", asked her mother

"Mom, dad, here is Santa Claus."

"Oh. What a beautiful girl!", said Santa.

"Were you a good girl this year?"

"Of course, I was,"

"Great! I have a special present for you.

But first, please give me some cookies and a glass of milk, I'm very hungry."

"Santa, please sit down", said mom.

"I heard that your girl was good, wasn't she?" "Yes", said dad.

"I have a gift for you. Here it is!" Mom, this is incredible! A doll, my favorite doll.

"Do you like it?", asked Santa.

"Yes, I have always wanted such a doll."

"I know that I'm an old man, but I remember that four months ago you wrote me a letter. Do you remember?"

"Yes", said Susan

"What is her name?"

"Yes, she has. Her name is Dolly."

"Great! Now, I have to get going. A lot of children are waiting for me. See you next year, of course if you are a good girl. Bye, princess!"

"Bye", whispered Susan. Susan had the most beautiful Christmas day ever. A Christmas she would never forget.



ON SANTA'S TEAM

adapted by Zima Karina, 9th F

My grandma taught me everything about Christmas. I was just a kid. I remember tearing across town on my bike to visit her on the day my big sister dropped the bomb: "There is no Santa Claus," jeered my sister. "Even dummies know that!" My grandma was not the gushy kind, never had been. I fled to her that day because I knew she would be straight with me. I knew Grandma always told the truth, and I knew that the truth always went down a whole lot easier when swallowed with one of her world-famous cinnamon buns. Grandma was home, and the buns were still warm. Between bites, I told her everything. She was ready for me.

"No Santa Claus!" she snorted. "Ridiculous! Don't believe it. That rumor has been going around for years, and it makes me mad, plain mad. Now, put on your coat, and let's go."

"Go? Go where, Grandma?" I asked. I hadn't even finished my second cinnamon bun and we were on the way to the store. As we walked through its doors, Grandma handed me ten dollars. "Take this money," she said, "and buy something for someone who needs it. I'll wait for you in the car."

I was only eight years old. I'd often gone shopping with my mother, but never had I shopped for anything all by myself. The store seemed big and crowded, full of people scrambling to finish their Christmas shopping. For a few moments I just stood there, confused, clutching that ten-dollar bill, wondering what to buy, and who on earth to buy it for. I thought of everybody I knew and I suddenly remembered Bobbie Decker.

He was a kid who sat right behind me in class. Bobbie Decker didn't have a coat. I knew that because he never went out during the break the winter..

I I would buy Bobbie Decker a coat. I settled on a red corduroy one that had a hood to it. It looked real warm, and he would like that. I put the coat and my ten-dollar bill on the counter and pushed them toward the lady behind it. She looked at the coat, the money, and me. "Is this a Christmas present for someone?" she asked kindly. "Yes," I replied shyly. "It's ... for Bobbie. He's in my class, and he doesn't have a coat." The nice lady smiled at me. I didn't get any change, but she put the coat in a bag and wished me a Merry Christmas. That evening, Grandma helped me wrap the coat in Christmas paper and ribbons, and write, "To Bobbie, From Santa Claus" on it. Then she drove me over to Bobbie Decker's house, explaining as we went that I was now and forever officially one of Santa's helpers. Grandma parked down the street from Bobbie's house, and she and I crept noiselessly and hid in the bushes by his front walk. I took a deep breath, dashed for his front door, threw the present down on his step, pounded his doorbell twice and flew back to the safety of the bushes and Grandma. Together we waited breathlessly in the darkness for the front door to open. Finally it did, and there stood Bobbie. He looked down, looked around, picked up his present, took it inside and closed the door.

Forty years haven't dimmed the thrill of those moments spent shivering, beside my grandma, in Bobbie Decker's bushes. That night, I realized that those awful rumors about Santa Claus were just what Grandma said they were: Ridiculous! Santa was alive and well ... AND WE WERE ON HIS TEAM!



CHRISTMAS CAROLS

WHITE CHRISTMAS

I'm dreaming of a white Christmas
Just like the ones I used to know
Where the treetops glisten,
and children listen
To hear sleigh bells in the snow

I'm dreaming of a white Christmas
With every Christmas card I write
May your days be merry and bright
And may all your Christmases be white

I'm dreaming of a white Christmas
With every Christmas card I write
May your days be merry and bright
And may all your Christmases be white.

THE CHRISTMAS SONG

Chestnuts roasting on an open fire
Jack Frost nipping at your nose
Yuletide carols being sung by a choir
And folks dressed up like Eskimos.
Everybody knows a turkey and some
Mistletoe
Help to make the season bright.
Tiny tots with their eyes all aglow
Will find it hard to sleep tonight
They know that Santa's on his way
He's loaded lots of toys and goodies on his
sleigh
And every mother's child is gonna spy
To see if reindeer really know how to fly.
And so I'm offering this simple phrase
To kids from 1 to 92
Although its been said
Many times, many ways
Merry Christmas to you...

SANTA CLAUS IS COMING TO TOWN

You better watch out!
Better not cry!
Better not pout!
I'm telling you why,
Santa Claus is comin' to town.

He's making a list
and checking it twice.
He's going to find out who's naughty or nice.
Santa Claus is comin' to town.

He sees when you're sleeping.
He knows when you're awake.
He knows if you've been bad or good.
So be good for goodness sake!
You better watch out!
Better not cry!
Better not pout!
I'm telling you why,
Santa Claus is comin' to town.

With little tin horns and little toy drums,
rootie-toot-toots and rum-a-tum tums.
Curly head dolls that toddle and coo,
elephants, boats and kiddie cars too.
Santa Claus is comin' to town.

The kids in girl and boy land
will have a jubilee.
They're going to build a toyland,
all around the Christmas tree.
You better watch out!
Better not cry!
Better not pout!
I'm telling you why,
Santa Claus is comin' to town.



THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

Every year the reading of "The Night Before Christmas" is a tradition that millions have come to enjoy.

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all
through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with
care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;

The children were nestled all snug in their
beds,
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their
heads;
And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled down for a long winter's nap,
When out on the lawn there arose such a
clatter,
I sprang from the bed to see what was the
matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.
The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow
Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below,
When, what to my wondering eyes should
appear,
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer,
With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them
by name;
"Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and
Vixen!
On, Comet! on Cupid! on, Donder and Blitzen!
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"
As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane
fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the
sky,
So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,
With the sleigh full of toys, and St. Nicholas
too.
And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a
bound.

He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his
foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes
and soot;

A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a peddler just opening his
pack.
His eyes -- how they twinkled! his dimples
how merry!
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a
cherry!
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard of his chin was as white as the
snow;
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke it encircled his head like a
wreath;
He had a broad face and a little round belly,
That shook, when he laughed like a bowlful of
jelly.
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of
myself;
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his
work,
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a
jerk,
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose;
He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a
whistle,
And away they all flew like the down of a
thistle.
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of
sight,
*"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-
night."*



MY CHRISTMAS

By Cuzman Piera, 9th E

Every year, by mid-December the spirit of Christmas floats in the air. Of course, there is a special atmosphere in my house, too. My family is getting ready for the holidays: we are tidying the house –it's spotless clean now-, we are going shopping and are looking for new, delicious recipes. My job is to decorate the Christmas tree together with my brother. Well, to be honest, I do all the work alone. Every year is same: my mother can't help but criticize my decorating skills, and as usual, she sits in her armchair, bossing me around. My father is the only one who's calm around the holidays. He starts the fire and likes to shop for food and presents.



On Christmas Eve we all gather around the dinner table and have the first, peaceful meal after all the work done for holidays. We share funny stories, eat my mom's great food and exchange presents. I'm very happy about the presents I receive because I know I am always on "the nice list". While we eat, we love to listen to carols. We also like receive carolers that stop by. We end our night by watching a Christmas movie together. And that's about it with our peaceful, "silent" night because on the 25th we start having guests over nonstop. But all in all, Christmas is about spending time with your family and appreciating what you have.

SANTA CLAUS' S LETTER

By Bogdan Robert, 9th E

Christmas was coming. Jamie and Ted had already begun to write long letters to Santa Claus. But one thing was rather queer: both

boys asked him the same things. Each letter ended with 'Just like brother's'. They agreed to ask for only one sled. They would rather ride together. One night, after they had gone to bed, Jamie said:

'Ted, if Santa Claus brings us skates Jim can teach us how to use them'. Jim is their best friend.

'Oh yes! And if we get fur mittens it will be such fun to make a fort'.

'And a snowman,' Jamie answered. 'I will always ride the sled down a hill, and you can ride it up'.

'I guess you won't, Jamie said, speaking loudly.

'Why not? Ted asked.

'Because it will be as much my sled as yours !'

'Yes of course, Ted replied. But I choose it first'.

'You are a selfish boy!' said Jamie.

'Well then, so are you!'

'I don't care. I'll ask mom if I can't have the first pic. I am the biggest!' shouted Jamie, jumping out of bed.

'You're a big cross cry baby!' said Ted, going out after his brother.

Jamie ran to his mom with Ted at his after him. Both were angry. Both talked at once.

Mamma was grieved. Her dear little boys had never been so unkind to each other before. She told them how their naughty words hurt her. That night they went to sleep on each other's arms, full of love and forgiveness. Christmas morning came at last. Very early the boys crept out of bed. Each little red stocking was full from toe to top. Boxes and paper parcels were piled around them. Such a good time! It seemed as if their letters had been answered. Suddenly Jamie cried:

'O Ted, here's a letter! They put their little heads together, and with their dad spelled this out:

"My dear boys,

No sled this year. You quarreled so I was afraid to bring it. I dropped it off the load about a week ago. Get ready for it next year. Merry Christmas !

Santa Claus

A CHRISTMAS NIGHT

By Bodea Vlad, 9th F

It was a cold and dark night. The snow was huge and the winter wind started to blow heavily. The streets of Glasgow were almost empty and it was a strange feeling out there. That special, but cold night was the Christmas night. A group of children were walking along the 3th street, in snow and frost, singing a Christmas Carol. 13 miles away, into an isolated and old farm, a family, a very happy family was celebrating the Holy Night of Christmas. Two little boys and a girl were sitting on a sofa. In the middle of the room, a big and very beautiful Christmas tree was lighting the faces of the children and the walls too. Near the Christmas tree, five gift packs, with a very beautiful wrappings were waiting.

In the corner of the room, two parents were watching the scene and they seem to be very happy for their kids. The children began to open the gift packs. They found toys, chocolates and... a sled. The whole house was filled with screams and shouts of joy. The sled was beautiful, big, amazing and they're like it.

Soon, the clock announced twelve o'clock. Thomas, Christopher and Marian went to bed. Their parents switched the lights off the Christmas tree and the candles. After that, they went to sleep too. In the street, the snow covered everything while the frost began to bite. It was the Christmas Night...

CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

By Talabă Denisa, 9th E

Christmas is a very special moment in everyone's lives. It's the most magical night for each one of us, mostly for kids, because Santa Claus is coming to town. He brings us presents, he gathers the whole family together and he makes us find joy, truth and faith in our hearts. The German people invented a tradition that most people keep it today. Some people like this tradition because it's a sign that the winter holidays are here. The women cook for their families potatoes or meat rolls in cabbage leaves and varied types of cookies here in Romania. On 24th of December, you have to keep your door open to wait for the children to come and sing Christmas carols. Usually they are a few kids. It's a pity that this tradition slowly disappears until nobody remembers it. Some examples of carols are: *Jingle Bells*, *Silent Night*, *The 12 days of Christmas* or *We wish you a Merry Christmas*. December it's a busy and beautiful month. Children can write letters to Santa so that their wishes may be come true. Christmas brings out the best in people, makes them happier and closer. I really love Christmas.



CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

By Tulea Ciprian, 9th F

THE NORWEGIAN "NISSE"



The Norwegian "Nisse" is not like his American relative Santa Claus. The name "Nisse" probably derives from St. Nicholas. But "nisser" - which are elves (or gnomes) are old figures which existed long before the birth of Christ. There are several types of "nisser" in Norway. The most known is the "Fjøsnisse" which who takes care of the animals on the farms. It is very short and often bearded and lives in a barn or a stable. He wears clothes of wool and often has a red knitted hat. The "Fjøsnisse" often plays tricks on people. Sometimes he will scare people by blowing out the lights in the barn or he will scare the farm dog at night. He can become very friendly , but you should never forget to give him a large portion of porridge on Christmas Eve - or else he will play tricks on you.

FRANCE-BUCHE DE NOEL

In France, and other countries in Europe, when winter gloom had got the upper hand, a large

log (many times a tree trunk) was chosen from the woodpile. It was decorated with ribbons and brought into the house with considerable fanfare - songs were song and everyone enjoyed themselves. The log was placed ceremoniously on the hearth and blessed by the master of the house. Who lit the French yule log was of importance and many times this fell upon the youngest member of the family. This was all done on the 24th of December and the log was expected to burn until the first day of the New Year, so a sturdy, dense piece of wood was the perfect candidate.

The yule log of yore would sit slowly burning through the week, giving people hope and comfort through the dark days of winter. With the dawning of the 20th century, considerable changes in daily living were taking place in French people's lives. Modern means of heating homes eliminated the need for wood in many cases and the tradition of the French yule log began to die out. Fortunately the French always had food to fall back on, and a pastry chef came up with the idea of making a cake to symbolically replace the yule log.



CHRISTMAS

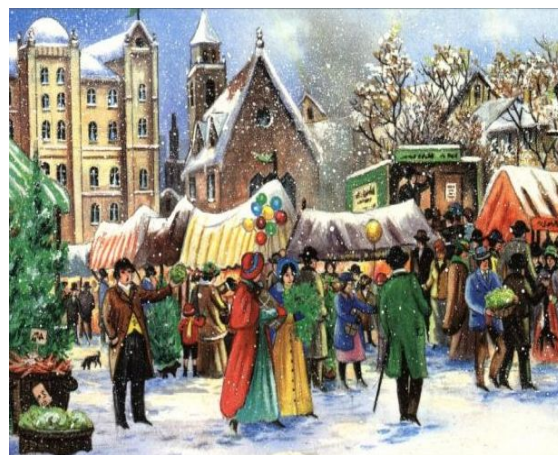
By Hirina Natalia, 9th F

Christmas is the most important holiday in the year . Two important things , apart from its religious significance , help to see this holiday apart from all others : the custom of giving gifts and the habit of spending it with the family . On Christmas Eve , the traditional ritual of hanging up a stocking at the foot of the bed is performed by millions of excited children all over the English speaking countries . During the day , the Christmas tree is dressed with crackers , candles , and toys for the children . Unlike in Romania , where Santa Claus (or Father Christmas , as some call him) comes on Christmas Eve, in Britain , in the United States and elsewhere, he arrives early in the morning of the 25th of December , stealing in to deliver the presents the children have asked him for.

The children are still asleep in spite of the efforts they made to stay awake and see him unload his precious burden of toys and sweets. Christmas Day is spent quietly at home. The excitement of all the presents is hardly over before it is time for the traditional Christmas dinner : turkey , duck or chicken with rich fruity Christmas pudding afterwards. The evening is spent in games , merriment and more eating and drinking. Holly, ivy, mistletoe and other evergreens are used to decorate the rooms . The mistletoe bough was considered in the old days of Druids (the priests of the Britons) to have magic powers and to work wonders .

Today, at Christmas time , people hang up mistletoe in their homes , because it will bring them good luck . The Christmas festivities which are heralded even two months before Christmas by shops and Christmas fairs , go on until Twelfth Night (January 6) , or the feast of the Epiphany. It was formerly celebrated as the closing day of the Christmas festivities. A large cake was served . It contained a bean or a coin which was to determine who should be the king of the feast . Some think that the custom was with special reference to the Magi

, the three wise men who came from the east to bear offerings to the infant Christ. Throughout these festivities, all the theatres in Great Britain present pantomimes , providing entertainment to both young and old. Some of the most popular pantomime characters are Robinson Crusoe , Cinderella , Peter Pan , Puss in Boots and Mother Goose. December 26-th is called Boxing Day. It takes its name from the old custom of giving employees or tradesmen an annual present or "Christmas box" on the day .



It is the day of recover after all the excitement and food which most of the time prove a little too much. The usual salutation at Christmas is "A merry Christmas to you" , and the reply is "The same to you". At Christmas people do not only give presents and get together with their families , but they also think of their friends and relatives who are too far away .

They send them Christmas Card and Greetings to wish them happiness and joy. Christmas cards are very different from one place to another and their designers are every year interested in inventing new inscriptions . Here are some of the inscriptions we came across more often: "Hope Christmas is extra special-just like You!" "May your Christmas Dreams come true or" "We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Very Happy New Year ! ."

CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS

By Ardelean Teodora, 9th E

Among all the festivals and holidays of the year, Christmas remains the most observed and most popular. The traditions surrounding the celebration of this season are almost as numerous as the people who celebrate it. Through the years, the holiday has been adapted to local customs, culture, and history and so has produced an amazing variety of Christmas traditions around the world.



The origins of these customs and traditions vary. Some, such as the giving of gifts or the use of a star arose directly or indirectly out of the biblical nativity stories while the legends of Saint Nicholas have their origin in church history. In contrast, the use of evergreens and the burning of the yule log have pagan origins which were transformed into distinctive Christian traditions. However, most of the Christmas customs and traditions, such as the use of a crèche or caroling, arose first as local traditions in certain countries or regions that became widely adopted. Other traditions, such as, reindeer, elves, the North Pole, have largely secular origins and are only loosely associated with the holiday in popular imagination or marketing techniques.

The star, the color red, the fir tree, the bell, the candle, the gift bow, the candy cane, the wreath are the most common symbols associated with Christmas. The spirit of Christmas causes people to decorate their homes and churches, cut down trees and bring them into their homes, decking them with silver and gold. In the light of that tree,

families make merry and give gifts one to another. When the sun goes down on December 24th, and darkness covers the land, families and churches prepare for participation in customs such as burning the yule log, singing around the decorated tree, kissing under the mistletoe and holly, and attending a late night service or midnight mass.

Outlawing and Re-inventing Christmas by Șoit Silviu -9th E

In the early 17th century, a wave of religious reform changed the way Christmas was celebrated in Europe. When Oliver Cromwell and his Puritan forces took over England in 1645, they vowed to rid England of decadence and, as part of their effort, cancelled Christmas. Later on, by popular demand, Charles II was restored to the throne and, with him, came the return of the popular holiday. The Pilgrims, English separatists that came to America in 1620, were even more orthodox in their Puritan beliefs than Cromwell. As a result, Christmas was not a holiday in early America. From 1659 to 1681, the celebration of Christmas was actually outlawed in Boston, and anyone exhibiting the Christmas spirit was fined five shillings. It wasn't until the 19th century that Americans began to embrace Christmas. However, the Americans are said to have re-invented Christmas, and changed it into a family-centered day of peace and nostalgia.

In his 1812 revisions to *A History of New York*, Washington Irving inserted a dream sequence featuring St. Nicholas soaring over treetops in a flying wagon. Later, in his five Christmas stories in *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon*, Irving described his experiences at an English country estate during the "coaching days" of the early 19th century, focusing on the sights, sounds, smells and traditions of old Christmas. In Irving's mind, Christmas was a peaceful, warm-hearted holiday, bringing groups together across lines of wealth or social status.

By portraying an idealized celebration of old-fashioned Christmas customs at an English manor, Irving contributed to the revival and reinterpretation of the Christmas holiday in the United States and throughout the world.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL by CHARLES DICKENS

Chapter 1 – Marley’s Ghost

Marley was dead, to begin with – there’s no doubt about that. He was as dead as a doornail. Marley and Scrooge were business partners once. But then Marley died and now their firm belonged to Scrooge, who was a stingy and heartless old man. Once upon a time, on Christmas Eve, old Scrooge sat busy in his office. It was very cold outside and in Scrooge’s office it was not much warmer either. Suddenly, a cheerful person entered the office. It was Scrooge’s nephew.

“A Merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!” Fred said. “Bah!” said Scrooge, “Humbug!”

“Christmas a humbug, uncle!” said Scrooge’s nephew. “You don’t mean that, I am sure?”

“I do,” said Scrooge. “What’s Christmas time to you? You have to pay bills without money! You’re a year older but not an hour richer! Keep Christmas in your way, and let me keep it in mine.”

“Keep it? But you don’t keep it,” said Scrooge’s nephew, who was a very friendly young man. He even tried to cheer Scrooge up and invited him for dinner on Christmas Day. But Scrooge said no and sent him out. When Scrooge’s nephew left, two gentlemen came in to collect money for the poor who had no place they could go. Stingy Scrooge, however, didn’t give the gentlemen any money.

“Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?” he asked sarcastically and told them to leave the office. When it was time to close the office, Scrooge talked to his clerk, Bob Cratchit.

“You want all day off tomorrow, don’t you?” said Scrooge.

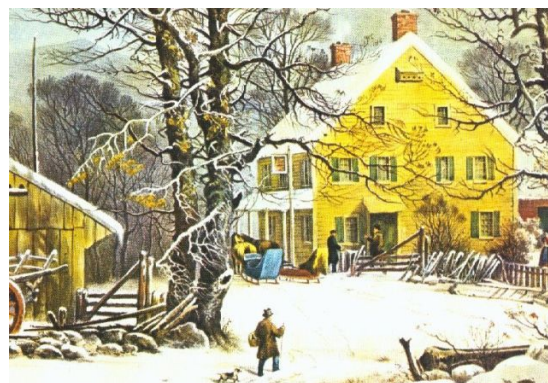
“If that is okay, Sir,” answered the clerk.

“It’s not okay,” said Scrooge, “and it is not fair. After all, I have to pay you for the day although you don’t work. But if it must be, I want you to start work even earlier the following morning.”

Cratchit promised that he would; and the two went home. Scrooge lived all alone in an old house. The yard was very dark and scary that night and when Scrooge wanted to unlock the door, he had the feeling that he saw Marley’s face there. This was rather spooky, but Scrooge was not frightened easily. “Humbug,” he said, opened the door and walked in. He locked himself in, however, which he usually didn’t do. But then he felt safe again and sat down before the fire.

Suddenly, Scrooge heard a noise, deep down below, as if somebody was dragging a heavy chain. The noise came nearer and nearer, and then Scrooge saw a ghost coming right through the heavy door. It was Marley’s ghost, and his chains were long; they were made of cash-boxes, keys and heavy purses.

“Who are you?” said Scrooge. “In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley.”



“But why do you come to me now?”

“I must wander through the world and I wear the chains because I was so stingy in life. I only cared about business but not about the people around me. Now, I am here to warn you. You still have a chance, Ebenezer. Three spirits will come to you. Expect the first tomorrow, when the bell tolls one.”

When he had said these words, Marley’s ghost disappeared; and the night became quiet again. Scrooge went straight to bed, without undressing, and fell asleep immediately.

Chapter 2 – The First of the Three Spirits

When Scrooge awoke, it was still very foggy and extremely cold, and there was no noise of people in the streets. Marley’s ghost bothered him. He didn’t know whether it was a dream or not.



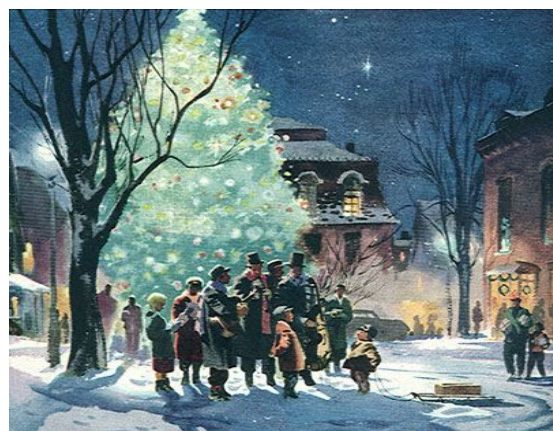
Then he remembered that a spirit should visit him at one o’clock. So Scrooge decided to lie awake and wait what happens. Suddenly, the clock struck one. Light flashed up in the room and a small hand drew back the curtains of his bed.

Then Scrooge found himself face to face with the visitor. It was a strange figure – like a child: yet not so like a child as like an old man. Its hair, which hung about its neck and down its back, was white as if with age; and yet the face had not a wrinkle in it.

“Who and what are you?” Scrooge asked the ghost. “I am the Ghost of Christmas Past. Rise and come with me.”

The ghost took Scrooge back in time, to a place where Scrooge was a boy. There Scrooge could see his younger self playing with other children. They were cheerfully running around the Christmas tree; and although they were poor, they had lots of fun.

The spirit also took Scrooge to a warehouse, where Scrooge was an apprentice. Scrooge saw the merry Christmas Eve they spent in the office with their boss Mr Fezziwig and his family. There was food and music and dancing and everybody was happy. Then the spirit took Scrooge to yet another place. Scrooge was older now. He was not alone, but sat by the side of a beautiful young girl, Belle. There were tears in her eyes.



“It is sad to see,” she said, softly. “that another love has displaced me – the love of gold. Your heart was full of love once, but now ...? I think it is better for us to part. May you be happy in the life you have chosen.”

“Spirit,” said Scrooge, “show me no more. Take me home. Why do you torture me?”

“One shadow more,” said the ghost. They were in another scene and place; a room, not very large or handsome, but full of comfort.

There was a happy family celebrating Christmas with all their warmth and heartiness. Scrooge recognized Belle, his former girlfriend. She was married now and had children.



“Belle,” said her husband with a smile, “I saw an old friend of yours this afternoon. Mr Scrooge it was. I passed his office window; and as it was not shut up, and he had a candle inside, I could see him there. His partner is dying, I hear; and there he sat alone. Quite alone in the world, I do believe.”

“Spirit,” said Scrooge in a broken voice, “Take me back! I cannot bear it any longer.”

He struggled with the ghost to take him back. And finally Scrooge found himself in his own bed again. He was very exhausted and sank into a heavy sleep.

Chapter 3 – The Second of the Three Spirit

Scrooge woke up in the middle of a snore, just before the clock struck one again. He sat up in his bed and waited for the second ghost to come. And there it was – the Ghost of Christmas Present. It had curly brown hair, sparkling eyes and it wore a simple green robe with white fur. Its feet were bare and on its head it wore a holly wreath.

The ghost took Scrooge to Bob Cratchit’s house – a very poor little dwelling. In the kitchen you could see Mrs Cratchit preparing

Christmas dinner. Her children were cheerfully running around. Then the door opened and Bob Cratchit came in with Tiny Tim upon his shoulders. Tiny Tim was Bob Cratchit’s youngest son. He bore a little crutch and had an iron frame around his limbs.

“On our way home, Tiny Tim told me that he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple. It might be pleasant to them to remember on Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk and blind men see.” Bob’s voice trembled when he said this.

Then Christmas dinner was ready, and everyone sat down at the table. As the Cratchits were very poor, it was not much they had for Christmas dinner. But still everyone was joyful and you could feel that they all had the Christmas Spirit in their hearts. “A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears! God bless us!” said Bob Cratchit.

“God bless us every one!” said Tiny Tim. He sat very close to his father’s side upon his little stool. Bob held his little hand, as if he feared to lose him.

“Spirit,” said Scrooge, who felt sorry for the boy, “tell me if Tiny Tim will live.”



“I see an empty seat,” replied the ghost, “and a crutch without an owner. If these shadows don’t change in the future, the child will die.

”This made Scrooge very sad, but the spirit went on and took Scrooge to his nephew’s house. Fred and his friends had a very cheerful party and played games. Scrooge really enjoyed their party and wanted to stay for another while but in a second it all faded and Scrooge and the spirit were again on their travels.



They visited many homes in many places: they saw sick people who were cheerful; people in foreign lands who were close at home, poor people who felt rich that day – all because of the Christmas Spirit. Suddenly, Scrooge noticed something strange about the ghost. Two children-like figures were at the ghost’s feet – a boy and a girl. But, they looked old and dreadful, like little monsters. Scrooge was shocked.

“Spirit, are they your creatures?” Scrooge asked. “They are Man’s creatures,” said the spirit “The boy is Ignorance. The girl is Want. Beware them both, but most of all beware this boy” said the spirit. “Have they no place they can go?” asked Scrooge.

“Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?” the spirit turned on Scrooge with his own words. The bell struck twelve. The Ghost of Christmas Present disappeared.

And at the last stroke of the bell, Scrooge saw the third ghost coming towards him.

Chapter 4 – The Last of the Spirits

Slowly and silently the ghost came nearer. It was very tall and wore a deep black piece of clothing, which covered its whole body and left nothing of it visible but one outstretched hand.

“Are you the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come?” asked Scrooge, “I fear you more than any other spirit.”

The ghost did not say a word, and Scrooge was really scared. They wandered through the city and Scrooge heard some men talking about a person who had died. Scrooge knew the men and wanted to find out, whom they were talking about. But the spirit moved on. They next stopped in an area where thieves and liars lived. They had stolen things with them and made fun of the person who once owned those things.

“Ha, ha!” laughed a woman, “He frightened everybody away from him when he was alive, to profit us when he was dead! Ha, ha, ha!” After that, the ghost led Scrooge through streets that were familiar to him; and as they went along, Scrooge looked here and there to find himself, but nowhere was he to be seen.

They entered poor Bob Cratchit’s house and found the mother and the children by the fire. Quiet. Very quiet! The noisy little Cratchits were as still as statues. When Bob Cratchit came in, the children hurried to greet him. Then the two young Cratchits got upon his knees and laid their little cheeks against his face as if to say, “Don’t mind it, father. Don’t be sad.”



“You went there today?” said his wife. “Yes, my dear,” returned Bob. “I wish you could have gone. It would have done you good to see how green the place is. But you’ll see it often. I promised him that we would walk there every Sunday. My little, little child.” cried Bob. “My little child.”

He broke down in tears. He couldn’t help it. If he could have helped it, he and his child would have been farther apart perhaps than they were. The ghost moved on and took Scrooge to a churchyard.

The spirit stood among the graves and pointed down to one. Scrooge slowly went towards it and following the ghost’s finger read upon the stone of the grave his own name, Ebenezer Scrooge.



“Spirit!” Scrooge cried, “hear me. I am not the man I was! I will not be the man I must have been so far! Why show me this if I am past all

hope? Good Spirit, I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the past, the present, and the future. The spirits of all three shall be within me. I will not ignore the lessons that they teach. Oh, tell me that I may change my fate!

”Full of fear, Scrooge caught the spirit’s hand. But the spirit suddenly changed – it shrank and faded and finally turned into a bedpost.

Chapter 5 – The End of It

Yes! And the bedpost was his own. The bed was his own, the room was his own. Best and happiest of all, the time before him was his own, and he could make the best of it.

“I will live in the past, the present, and the future.” Scrooge repeated, as he got out of bed. “I don’t know what to do! I am as happy as an angel! I don’t know what day of the month it is. I don’t know how long I’ve been among the spirits. Hallo! Hallo there!”

He ran to the window, opened it, and put out his head. “What’s today?” cried Scrooge, calling downward to a boy in Sunday clothes. “Today?” replied the boy. “Why, Christmas Day!” “It’s Christmas Day!” said Scrooge to himself. “I haven’t missed it!

The spirits have done it all in one night. Hallo, my fine fellow! Do you know the poulterer’s at the corner? And do you know whether they’ve sold the big turkey that was hanging up there?” “What, the one as big as me?” returned the boy. “It’s still hanging there now.”

“Is it!” said Scrooge. “Go and buy it! I am in earnest. Go and buy it and come back with the man that I may give them the direction where to take it. I’ll give you a shilling for it. Come back with the man in less than five minutes

and I'll give you half-a-crown!" The boy was off like a shot.



"I'll send it to Bob Cratchit," whispered Scrooge cheerfully. "It's twice the size of Tiny Tim." He dressed himself all in his best, and at last got out into the streets. He had not gone far, when he came towards the two gentlemen, who had walked into his office the day before.

"My dear Sir," said Scrooge, "How do you do? I fear I wasn't pleasant to you yesterday. Allow me to ask your pardon. And will you have the goodness to ..." here Scrooge whispered in his ear.

"Lord bless me!" cried the gentleman, "My dear Mr. Scrooge, are you serious? I don't know what to say to such generosity."

Scrooge then went to church, and walked through the streets, and watched the people. He had never dreamed that anything could give him so much happiness. In the afternoon he went to his nephew's house.

"Fred," said Scrooge, "It's your uncle Scrooge. I have come to dinner. Will you let me in, Fred?" Of course, Fred let him in; it was a very hearty welcome and they all had a wonderful party. But Scrooge was early at the office next morning. Oh, he was early there.

If he could only catch Bob Cratchit coming late... And he did it; yes, he did. Bob was full eighteen minutes and a half behind his time. Scrooge sat with his door wide open, that he might see him come in. "Hallo!" growled Scrooge, in his usual way. "What do you mean by coming here at this time of day? I am not going to stand this sort of thing any longer. And therefore," he continued, jumping from his stool, "and therefore I am about to raise your salary. A Merry Christmas, Bob."



Bob Cratchit was very surprised, and so were many people who found Scrooge so changed. Scrooge became a better person. To Tiny Tim, who did not die, he was a second father. Scrooge became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man, as the good old city knew, or any other good old city or town in the good old world.

It was always said of Scrooge, that he knew how to keep Christmas well. May that be truly said of us, and all of us! And so, as Tiny Tim would say, God bless us, every one!