Southern Alberta Community Living Association

# CONTRACTOR CHRONICLE

December 2008

## A Christmas Story From Sue…

### Christmas – Origin, Meaning & Lesson of Rudolph The Red-Nose Reindeer!

A story book for Christmas was created in 1939 during the time of the great depression. The story was created for the Chicago based Montgomery Wards Department Stores featuring a new character called Rudolph. One of the highlights for the Christmas season was for parents to take their children for a visit to large department stores such as Montgomery Wards to visit Santa, sit on his knee and receive a gift. For many years the Montgomery Wards Santa gave away from his Christmas sack a specially printed Christmas coloring book. The store wanted to save money and do something different so it gave one of its stores copywriters, 34 year old Rudolph L May the job of coming up with a story. May liked writing stories and he himself was said to be taunted as a child who was shy and small in statue. It is believed that the idea of being ostracized came from his own personal experiences.

Originally May wrote the story as a rhyming verse which his young 4 years old daughter Barbara loved. Originally store owners thought a red nose may be inappropriate as generally a red nose was associated with drinking. However after illustrations surfaced this suggestion was dismissed and the story was approved. The story book of Rudolph soon filled Santa's sack; a new gimmick for promotions in the Montgomery Wards stores.

Upon release in 1939 2.4 million copies of the story was distributed. Due to war time paper shortages, minimal copies were printed over the coming years. However by 1946 it was estimated that a total of 6 million copies had been given away. The story later went on to be translated into 25 languages.

Rudolph was created during a difficult time for May as his wife had a terminal illness (cancer) and died. Writing Rudolph was a distraction that brought him and his young daughter Barbara together in a magical way. May changed the story as he wrote it depending on Barbara's reaction. May received no royalties for Rudolph because copyright was held by Montgomery Wards for whom he was an employee only. May was snowed under with medical and other bills. He went to Montgomery Wards to seek release of the rights to Rudolph. It was in 1947 that his request succeeded. May was able to transform his financial circumstances as he had the story printed commercially in the same year. The following year a nine minute cartoon was shown in theatres. This soon followed by May's brother in law Johnny Marks, a songwriter, developing a song to go with the story. His song 'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer' was recorded and made famous by Gene Autry in 1949. It sold two million copies in the first year. It become a Christmas classic and one of the best selling songs of all time. In 1964 Burl Ives narrated a TV special about Rudolph which is still popular today. May secured a good life from Rudolph. He quit his copywriting job in 1951 to concentrate on Rudolph yet returned a number of years later and stayed until his retirement in 1971. He died in 1976.

Rudolph came along more than 100 years after the flying reindeer made their debut. Although loved and cherished by his family, Rudolph was a misfit, teased and later ostracized by the reindeer community because of his unusual glowing red nose. The story unfolds with Santa discovering Rudolph by accident when he noticed a glow emanating from Rudolph's room while delivering presents to his home one Christmas eve. As the thickening fog was already the cause of several accidents and delays Santa was worried he may not be able to complete his rounds. Rudolph was recruited as the light of the way leading Santa's reindeer team to successfully fulfill all deliveries. The message of Rudolph proved popular, that is, a perceived liability is often an asset waiting to be discovered!

By Bernadette Dimitrov, The HoHoHo Expert!
Source: http://www.hohohochristmas.com/Christmas_Rudolph_Origin_and_Meaning.html

## In the Spotlight

Darlene and Jason Green have been contractors with SACLA since August 2006. They moved to Lethbridge in '06 and have been happily married for 3 years…Congratulations! Darlene and Jason are very caring and compassionate people and share their lives and home with an adult female. They enjoy activities that involve their friends and family such as camping, barbeques, picnics, swimming, bowling and karaoke. Darlene and Jason are very involved with their church and help out with activities such as the choir, music and working with the church youth. They have 2 Electric and 2 Acoustic guitars in their house which Jason enjoys playing frequently and Darlene is involved in a Writers group. Their encouragement, dedication and positive out look on life continue to be valued by all of those surrounding them. Thank you!!

## WHAT'S NEW?

**Wishing everyone Happy Holidays and a Festive New Year!!**

Just a reminder that the office will be closed December 25, 26 and January 1.

Don't forget to attend our "I Am Community" Come & Go Reception at the Galt Museum on December 11, 2008 from 3:00 p.m.—6:00 p.m.

## *RECIPE OF THE MONTH* : No Bake Rum Balls

Source http://allrecipes.com/Recipe/No-Bake-Rum-Balls/Detail.aspx

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 1/2 cups crushed vanilla wafers
- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- 2 tablespoons cocoa powder
- 1 cup chopped walnuts
- 3 tablespoons dark corn syrup
- 1/4 cup rum

### DIRECTIONS

1. In a medium sized bowl, mix together the vanilla wafers, cocoa and sugar. Stir in the chopped walnuts, corn syrup and rum. Mix until well blended.
2. Form dough into 2 inch balls and roll in confectioners' sugar. Store in covered tin.

## Quotes

*"Christmas is a time when you get homesick - even when you're home. "*
~Carol Nelson~

*"One of the most glorious messes in the world is the mess created in the living room on Christmas day. Don't clean it up too quickly."*
*~ Andy Rooney ~*

*"There's nothing sadder in this world than to awake Christmas morning and not be a child. "*
*~ Erma Bombeck ~*

HEALTH & WELLNESS presents:

# HOLIDAY HAZARD CHECKLIST

*REPRINTED FROM SOURCE:* http://www.rd.com/christmas-safety-checklist/article15322.html

**Prevent holiday calamaties with our helpful list of tips.**

The holidays should be a magical time for children. Yet each year, hospital emergency rooms treat about 8700 people for injuries, such as falls, cuts and shocks, related to holiday lights, decorations and Christmas trees.

In addition, Christmas trees are involved in about 400 fires annually, resulting in 20 deaths, 70 injuries and an average of more than $15 million in property loss and damage. Young children are particularly at risk for injury from sharp objects, such as glass ornaments, or from well-intentioned gifts of toys that are not appropriate to their age.

**Safer Trees and Decorations**

- When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant." Although this label does not mean the tree won't catch fire, it does indicate the tree will resist burning and should extinguish quickly.
- When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from branches and when bent between your fingers, needles do not break. The trunk butt of a fresh tree is sticky with resin, and when tapped on the ground, the tree should not lose many needles.
- When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces and radiators. Because heated rooms dry live trees out rapidly, be sure to keep the stand filled with water. Place the tree out of the way of traffic and do not block doorways.
- Cut a few inches off the trunk of your tree to expose the fresh wood. This allows for better water absorption and will help to keep your tree from drying out and becoming a fire hazard.
- Use only noncombustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree. Choose tinsel or artificial icicles of plastic or nonleaded metals. Leaded materials are hazardous if ingested by children.
- Never use lighted candles on a tree or near other evergreens. Always use nonflammable holders and place candles out of children's reach.
- Take special care to avoid decorations that are sharp or breakable, keep trimmings with small removable parts out of the reach of children to avoid the child swallowing or inhaling small pieces, and avoid trimmings that resemble candy or food, which may tempt a child to eat them.
- Wear gloves to avoid eye and skin irritation while decorating with spun glass "angel hair." Follow container directions carefully to avoid lung irritation while decorating with artificial-snow sprays.

**Bright Ideas for Lights**

- Indoors or outside, always use lights that have been tested for safety by a recognized testing laboratory that indicates conformance with safety standards.
- Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections, and throw out damaged sets.
- Use no more than three standard-size sets of lights per single extension cord.
- Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights, and a person touching a branch could be electrocuted.
- Before using lights outdoors, check labels to be sure they have been certified for outdoor use.
- Fasten outdoor lights securely to trees, house walls, or other firm supports to protect the lights from wind damage. Use insulated staples to hold strings in place, not nails or tacks. Or run strings of lights through hooks (available at hardware stores).
- Plug all outdoor electric decorations into circuits with ground fault circuit interrupters to avoid potential shocks.
- Turn off all lights when you go to bed or leave the house. The lights could short out and start a fire.

**Friendlier Fireplaces**

- Use care with "fire salts," which produce colored flames when thrown on wood fires. They contain heavy metals that can cause intense gastrointestinal irritation and vomiting if eaten. Keep them away from children.
- Do not burn wrapping papers in the fireplace. A flash fire may result, as wrappings ignite suddenly and burn intensely.
- Before lighting any fire, remove all greens, boughs, papers, and other decorations from fireplace area. Check to see that the flue is open.

**Trouble-Free Toys**

Before buying a toy or allowing your child to play with a toy that he has received as a gift, read the instructions carefully. If the toy is appropriate for your child, show him how to use it properly.

- Follow recommended age ranges on toy packages. Toys that are too advanced could pose a safety hazard for younger children.
- To prevent both burns and electrical shocks, don't give young children (under age ten) a toy that must be plugged into an electrical outlet. Instead, buy toys that are battery-operated.
- Children under age three can choke on small parts contained in toys or games. Government regulations specify that toys for children under age three cannot have parts less than 1 1/4 inches in diameter and 2 1/4 inches long.
- Children under age 8 can choke or suffocate on uninflated or broken balloons. Remove strings and ribbons from toys before giving them to young children.
- Watch for pull toys with strings that are more than 12 inches in length. They could be a strangulation hazard for babies.

**Outdoor Play**

- Make sure your child's gloves and shoes stay dry. If either becomes wet, change your child into a dry pair.
- Sledding on or into the roadway should be prohibited. Look for shallow slopes that are free of obstacles, such as trees and fences.
- Most skiing and skating injuries involve twists, sprains and strains. Prevent injuries by providing your child with competent instruction, proper equipment and appropriate supervision.

**Happy Visiting**

- Clean up immediately after a holiday party. A toddler could rise early and choke on leftover food or come in contact with alcohol or tobacco.
- Remember that the homes you visit may not be childproofed. Keep an eye out for danger spots.
- Keep a laminated list with all of the important phone numbers you or a baby-sitter are likely to need in case of an emergency. Include the police and fire department, your pediatrician and the national Poison Help Line, 1-800-222-1222.
- Traveling, visiting family members, getting presents, shopping, etc., can all increase your child's stress levels. Trying to stick to your child's usual routines, including sleep schedules and timing of naps, can help you and your child enjoy the holidays and reduce stress.

**Food Safety**

- Bacteria are often present in raw foods. Fully cook meats and poultry, and thoroughly wash raw vegetables and fruits.
- Be sure to keep hot liquids and foods away from the edges of counters and tables, where they can be easily knocked over by a young child's exploring hands.
- Wash your hands frequently, and make sure your children do the same.
- Never put a spoon used to taste food back into food without washing it.
- Always keep raw foods and cooked foods separate, and use separate utensils when preparing them.
- Always thaw meat in the refrigerator, never on the countertop.
- Foods that require refrigeration should never be left at room temperature for more than two hours.