

Symbol of Cheer Death Trap If Precautions Not Observed

Christmas trees, traditional symbols of cheer and happiness, can become death-dealing instruments if safety precautions are not taken.

Christmas trees are exceptionally combustible because of their high content of pitch and resin. Many deaths and fire losses can be traced directly to Christmas trees and allied hazards.

The A.I.-Canada Insurance Federation recommends the following safety precautions:

- Small trees, less combustible than big ones, should be chosen.
- Trees should be kept outdoors until a few days before Christmas.
- Trees should be set away from radiators, heaters and fireplaces.
- A container filled with water should be part of the base.
- Do not place trees near doorways or stairways.
- Cotton or paper decorations, unless fireproof, should not be used.
- Be sure electrical decorations do not overload circuits.
- Sockets and wiring of lighting sets should be carefully inspected before installation.
- Make sure lights are not drying out Christmas tree needles.
- Lights should not be left burning when house is unoccupied.
- Fallen needles should be swept out regularly. When needles start to fall, tree should be discarded.
- Gift wrappings should be removed promptly from beneath the tree after gifts have been opened.
- Never smoke or lay a cigarette down near tree or other decorations.
- Don't set up electric trains near the tree.

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REPRIEVE SET FOR DOGS OVER YULETIDE HOLIDAY

ONTARIO, Calif. (AP)—Death takes a holiday until New Year's as far as stray dogs here are concerned.

Thomas F. Kennon has guaranteed their pound fees from now until January 1.

"I just couldn't enjoy the Christmas season thinking that every stray dog were being killed at the pound," Kennon explained. "Now that I know every dog is safe, I feel much better."

True Date of Christmas Unknown

Exact date of the birth of Christ is shrouded in confusion and, as a result, the celebration of Christmas occurs on many different dates throughout the Christian world.

In an old manuscript, the Calendar of Philocalus which appeared in the year 354 A.D., it states: "In the Year One After Christ, the Lord Jesus was born on December 25, a Friday, and the 15th day of the New Moon."

Another ancient book written by Hippolytus in 202 A.D. tells us that Jesus was born in Bethlehem "on Wednesday, December 25th, in the 42nd year of Augustus."

However, according to astronomy, December 25th, A.D. 1, fell on Sunday.

In terms of our American Christmas, the holiday is celebrated from six to 10 days later in some countries, and in others—it is observed earlier. December 6th is the date of Christmas in most Western European countries and is the beginning of a long holiday season.

The Armenians were the first people to set up a Christmas state and their Christmas Eve is January 6th.

Christmas Visits Started in 1540

In 1540 when a plague was raging in Switzerland, 12 plagues of Rheinfelden formed a brotherhood to pray for St. Sebastian's aid, and to nurse sick and bury the dead.

Pestilence in medieval times was ascribed to evil spirits, water, so the Brotherhood of Sebastian visited each of the town's seven fountains, pray and singing hymns at each stop. They still continue this custom but only on Christmas Eve.

For this ritual the 12 brothers are dressed in black, with black silk top hats. At every fountain they gather around the lantern-bearer and sing a medieval song.

The march begins at Froeschweide fountain where a plague is supposed to have started three centuries ago. When they have passed the seventh, they enter the church for midnight mass, and ceremoniously place their lanterns on the altar of St. Sebastian.

STARTED YOUNG
Joseph Haydn, the great Austrian composer, was a chorister in Vienna at age 12.



EXCEPT FOR SANTA CLAUS himself, the photographer was about the busiest person around at the recent opening of Santa Claus Village at Val David in the Laurentian Mountains north of Montreal. Filled with the joyous spirit of Christmas, the enthusiastic cameraman recorded the following scenes showing: (1) Santa Claus arriving at his new home via a modern helicopter rather than the proverbial reindeer; (2) nine-year-old Marcel Thoin, grandson and official representative of Montreal's Mayor Camillien Houde, presenting the keys of the new Village to Mayor Beaulieu of Val David; (3) Santa Claus and some of his little helpers being welcomed to his new home; (4) a llama from the slopes of the Peruvian Andes, one of the many animals which roam freely through the Village, attracting almost as much attention from young visitors as Santa Claus himself; (5) Santa Claus' own house, one of the many attractions in the Village; (6) the jolly old gentleman himself entrancing one of his many friends; (7) two of the bear cubs revelling in their specially-built pit which, when illuminated at night, resembles a giant birthday cake; and (8) the Chapel of Saint Nicholas which contains a crib reminiscent of the first Christmas.

Canadian Churches Buy Coronation Carpets From Westminster Abbey

By RON EVANS
LONDON (CP)—Eight Canadian churches and chapels are receiving sections of Westminster Abbey's lush blue and gold Coronation carpet, after bidding in a \$9,000 jigsaw puzzle.

The carpet, together with other Coronation furnishings from the Abbey, was sold by the ministry of works to help defray expenses. Prices ranged from \$3 to \$4 a square yard.

The great carpet, which originally cost \$6,600, sold in sections to churches, chapels and schools throughout the Commonwealth and the United States for a profit of almost \$2,500.

The ministry advertised soon after the Coronation that the carpet would be put up for sale and almost 5,000 bids poured in. That caused a problem since the carpet covered only 2,320 square yards and officials were anxious that all requests should be filled.

A government expert came up with a plan allowing the irregular-shaped carpet to be cut into smaller complex patterns with minimum wastage.

LARGE SECTIONS SOLD
Canada's largest single section, a rectangle of the gold theatre carpet 26 feet by 13 feet, goes to the chapel of the Victoria Hospital School of Nursing, London, Ont., while a church in St. Stephen, N.B., will receive five pieces of varying sizes of the blue carpet from the Abbey annex.

Most of the sections now have been cleaned and rebound and ministry officials say they hope to have them all shipped before the end of the year.

The carpeting is the last of the Coronation furnishings to be sold. The 1,978 chairs, valued at \$14,835, and 5,202 stools, worth \$21,003, were bought by the peers, peeresses and other British and foreign dignitaries who occupied them during the ceremony.

The two most important chairs, the Coronation chair and the chair of state, have been sent to Buckingham Palace on permanent loan as souvenirs for the Queen.

The huge coats of arms of Commonwealth countries which decorated Parliament Square in front of the Abbey have been sent as gifts to their respective governments.

Tree Trimming Methods Vary

When it comes to trimming the Christmas tree, you, like many others, probably have some very definite ideas of your own. If you haven't the following suggestions may prove welcome as well as practical.

The trend seems to be, as always, towards a large Christmas tree as the room will permit. The old-fashioned, floor-to-ceiling tree is still the standby in many homes and, where space is available, a big tree is always most cheerful and "Christmasy."

You may be one of those fortunates who remembers the tree trimmed with garlands of popcorn or lats of cranberries, or both. Maybe you still find a tree "bare" without a manger or ice skating scene beneath it to simply amplify your feeling of Christmas.

To some extent, the type and size of tree used depends on the section of the country. People in the northeast and east favor the big, long-needed balsam, while the south and west prefer the southern and the Douglas fir.

Many families like happily-lighted trees, decorated with multicolored glass ornaments of all sizes, shapes and colors topped with a gaily large gold or silver star.

Week-Long Yuletide Feasts Not Unusual in Days of Old

Once upon a medieval Yuletide, King Richard III of England celebrated at Litchfield—and during the festivities 2,000 oxen and 200 tons of wine were consumed.

Of course, the feudal set-up provided the great lords with the wherewithall for magnificence—the lords received gifts from their tenants and kings received gifts from their nobles; and the graduated scale for giving and receiving was as well ascertained as the quiddam honorarium of any barrister or physician.

Queen Elizabeth received a large part of her wardrobe as gifts from her counties, and if the quality or quantity was not satisfactory, the donors were unceremoniously informed of the situation.

When Henry III entertained a thousand knights, peer and assorted nobles who came to

attend the Yuletide marriage of the Princess Margaret, his majesty received a royal Christmas gift of £2,700, plus 600 fat oxen from the Archbishop of York.

With similar assistance, whether exhorted or given in the spirit of generosity appropriate to the season, his majesty could well afford to give Christmas feasts for the poor like the one given in Westminster Hall in 1248, which lasted a week.

Striving to outdo his predecessor and give his successors something to shoot at, Henry VIII kept one Yuletide at which the cost of gold cloth that was used amounted to £600 alone. He had tents erected and artificial gardens plotted within the spacious hall of his palace. Knights came out of the tents to joust in tournaments and fantastically dressed dancers emerged from the gardens to entertain the guests.

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