

COLLECTOR'S COURIER

Volume Six

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Spirit of Christmas Thrives In Chattanooga Thanks To Local Collector's Club

It all started with the idea of brightening the holidays for some families with little cause for being jolly at Christmastime.

Last year, the Chattanooga (Tennessee) Hallmark Collector's Club donated several 1991 Keepsake Ornaments to the city's Ronald McDonald House. Members of the club used the ornaments to decorate a Christmas tree displayed in the house.

"The families and other visitors we had last Christmas just oohed and aahed at the Hallmark tree and the others we had in the house. Everyone, especially the children, thought the Hallmark tree was something special," recalls Jane Kaylor, executive director for the Ronald McDonald House.

Donating ornaments and decorating the tree have already become something of a tradition for the club. That's why in a few weeks the club's 29 members will unpack the 1991 designs, and each member will donate at least one 1992 ornament to adorn

the tree. In each coming year the club plans to add current year ornaments to those donated in years past.

"We wanted to do something with a purpose, something that would help us channel our energy and know we were making a difference," says Kathleen Doherty, a member who acts as the club's historian. She says it was Beverly Sweeney, another member of the

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club, who suggested the idea of supporting the Ronald McDonald House.

The house serves as a "home away from home" for parents and other family members with children hospitalized in Erlanger Medical Center or its T.C. Thompson Children's Hospital.



Jane Kaylor, (above) executive director of the Chattanooga Ronald McDonald House. (Right) Local club member Kathleen Doherty wore her Club convention costume, which was inspired by the 1985 "Old-Fashioned Doll," while decorating the tree.

The facility, which opened in late 1990 and has housed well over 500 families, is located on the grounds of the medical center.

Donating the ornaments was just the beginning, according to the club's president, Barbara Miller. Throughout this year members have been collecting household supplies and other goods at each club meeting and donating them to the house.

Members of the Chattanooga club will expand their holiday activities even more this year. Doherty says members plan to sing Christmas carols at a local

senior citizen's center during the holiday season. "We hope to enlist some of our husbands to accompany us on guitars and other instruments," she remarks.

It was Doherty who prompted another of the club's most recent undertakings.

She spotted a newspaper article about a Nashville, Tennessee, family raising money for a rare organ transplant for their 19-month-old daughter.

"It was such a moving story that I thought we should try to help. We took up donations and raised \$86 at our next meeting," Doherty recalls. The owner of the local Hallmark store which sponsors the local club matched the contribution.



Each and every member of the Chattanooga club can be proud of their record of helping others in their community, says Rachel Perkal, Collector's Club manager.

She adds: "The Chattanooga collector's club sets a splendid example for what can be accomplished when you take the spirit of Christmas to heart and remember that the holidays are really about caring and giving."



Yule Tidings

It is truly hard to believe that as you're reading this, we are winding down yet another membership year. Here at Club headquarters, we are decorating our offices, pulling out our favorite tapes of seasonal music and preparing to tackle the mountains of mail that this season inevitably brings.

As always, everyone here takes pride in knowing that, hopefully, our efforts have added a little something extra to your Christmas tradition. Soon your homes will be turned out in full holiday splendor, and everyone will settle in for a season of sharing and celebration with friends and family.

When the holidays pass and 1992 ends, we'll gear up for another membership year. For our Charter Members, it will be our seventh year together. And for all our members, it will be a year of fun and discovery.

We'll mark the 20th anniversary of Keepsake Ornaments in 1993, and we want to celebrate throughout the membership year. Until then, I hope you enjoy what still remains of 1992. May your holidays be warm, healthy and made of memories.

Rachel Perkal
Collector's Club Manager

South Bend: Where Christmas Came in July

There were Christmas trees, smiles and plenty of Keepsake Ornaments and other Hallmark collectibles. If you closed your eyes, it was easy to imagine that Christmas had come early at the International Collectible Exposition, even though it was the middle of July.

Hallmark attended the South Bend, Indiana, show for the first time, displaying 1992 Keepsake Ornaments and several Hallmark Galleries lines.

More than 15,000 collectors, including at least 2,000 Collector's Club members, attended the show.

Keepsakes artists Ed Seale and Duane Unruh appeared at seminars, where they talked about their work. They also autographed ornaments and figurines.

"This was a great opportunity for members to meet two of our most popular artists as well as others who work on Keepsake Ornaments and Hallmark collectibles," says Rachel Perkal, manager of the Collector's Club.

Also in attendance was Tobin Fraley, creator of the new Keepsake Ornament carousel series bearing his name and the Tobin Fraley Carousel Collection from Hallmark Galleries. California artist Thomas Blackshear, who designed the Innocent Wonders line from Hallmark Galleries, appeared as well.

After making their way through the crowded expo hall, Club members visited a Hallmark hospitality room.

Perkal extended a heartfelt thanks to members of the Hoosier Keepsake Connection who helped staff the hospitality room. They included David Hamrick, Mary Thrasher, Ethel Coplen, Irene Clay and Lois Tucker.

The hospitality room, like the show, was the perfect place to meet other collectors and share collecting stories.



Centuries of Tradition Shaped the "North Pole Nutcrackers"

Colorful nutcrackers are so much a part of our December decor that the holidays would seem incomplete without them. But just how did these delightful figures become associated with Christmas? And how did a simple kitchen tool, designed for cracking hard-shelled nuts, become a decorative and valued collectible?

The best-known Christmas connection occurred in 1892, with the premier of The Nutcracker ballet by the Russian composer, Tchaikovsky. The hero of this fanciful tale is a wooden Nutcracker, who is a Christmas Eve gift to 7-year-old Marie and her brother from their Godfather Drosselmeier. With the children's help, their Nutcracker soon vanquishes a cruel Mouse King and the hordes of hungry mice who come to devour the holiday candies. And then the true identity of the Nutcracker is revealed — he's the King of Candyland!

Children and adults around the world still applaud Christmastime performances of the 100-year-old ballet, and there are presentations by some 200 dance companies in the United States alone. But relatively few people

realize that the character of the Nutcracker is even older than the ballet.

He first appears in a short story published by the German author, E.T.A. Hoffman, in 1819. That was a time when fairy tales were very popular, and when master wood carvers were creating

Historically Speaking...

mechanical clocks with elaborate folk art figures. Indeed, Hoffman's story tells us that Godfather Drosselmeier is a clockmaker, and that the wooden prince belongs to an entire family of Nutcrackers. Hoffman describes the way they work, and he even introduces the

expression, "a hard nut to crack."

By the time the story was written, nutcracking tools had been around for centuries. They had evolved from simple hammers into fancy ones, into devices with hinged levers, and into figures carved of wood. One pair of figural English nutcrackers, for example, has been handed down to us from the 1650s.

Today, there is growing interest in nutcrackers as collectibles, and enthusiasts seek designs of all materials and shapes. Collectors take particular pleasure in finding new interpretations of holiday nutcrackers, such as the "North Pole Nutcrackers" in the 1992 Keepsake Ornament line.

Linda Sickman, who sculpted the group of six handcrafted ornaments, says that she has been collecting nutcrackers for several years.

"I wanted this group to look like elves helping Santa get ready for Christmas," Sickman explains. "My mom is an excellent cook, so I included a baker in her honor."

The Keepsakes artist provided a number of special touches — the soft, plush hair, the fabric costumes, and holiday accessories. And of course, the Nutcrackers really do open. It's a tradition with timeless appeal.



The "North Pole Nutcrackers" are purely decorative and shouldn't be used for cracking nuts.

New Displays and Themes Set the Stage for Merry Miniatures

A growing number of ornament collectors are discovering the charm and collectibility of Merry Miniatures. However, while collectors were displaying more and more of these small figurines in their homes, they didn't have any way to highlight their collections. Until now!

"Collectors told us they needed a showcase for their Merry Miniatures — something that really sets the stage for the different seasonal collections," says Tina Hacker, who worked with the Keepsakes artists in planning the 1993 designs.

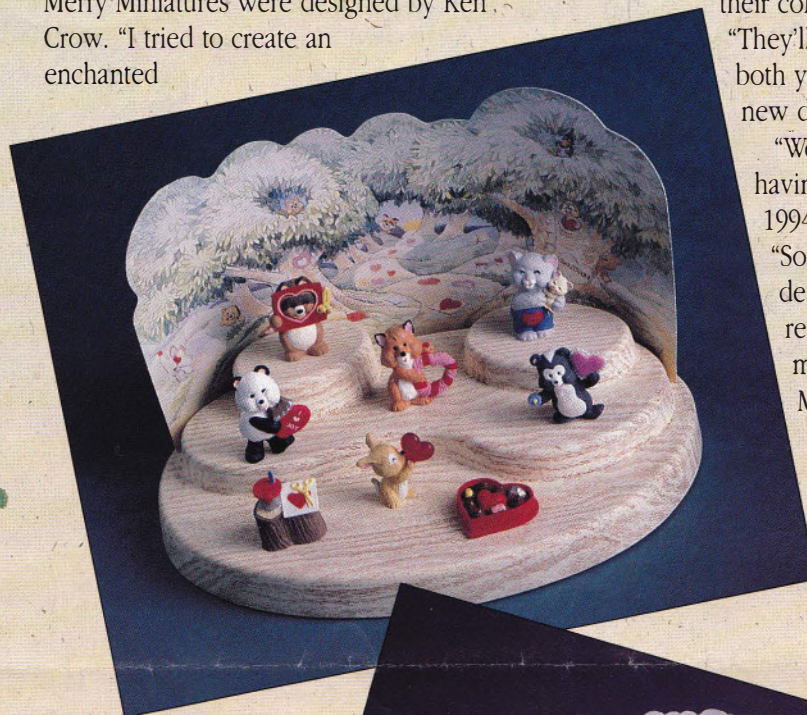
Patriotic figures and symbols inspired the new Fourth of July designs to be available in 1993.

"We've created a special display stand that is very much like a stage setting," she continues. "Beginning with the 1993 Valentine's Day offering, you'll find a colorful display backdrop for our seasonal and summer offerings as well as a unique three-tiered display stand designed to hold the backdrops and several Merry Miniatures."

The Keepsakes senior editor explains that each offering centers around a theme. For example, the Valentine's Day theme is a forest named "Heartland." The backdrop shows a fanciful forest decorated with hearts in honor of the season. And the creatures in the forest — the Merry Miniatures — are busy

making all types of valentines.

The Valentine theme, backdrop and Merry Miniatures were designed by Ken Crow. "I tried to create an enchanted



world," the artist remarks. "There are a lot of heart shapes in the trees and you'll find my crow, Kilroy, there, too!"

Among the Valentine designs, there is a bunny with a red balloon heart, a fox with a heart wreath and a decorative box of Valentine candy.

A new seasonal offer for 1993 is the Fourth of July, Hacker adds. Designed by Julia Lee, the Merry Miniatures were inspired by patriotic figures and symbols such as Betsy Ross and the Liberty Bell.

"You might say the theme for this group is the song, 'America the Beautiful,'" Hacker suggests, since that's what the backdrop illustrates.

When you look at the backdrop, you'll

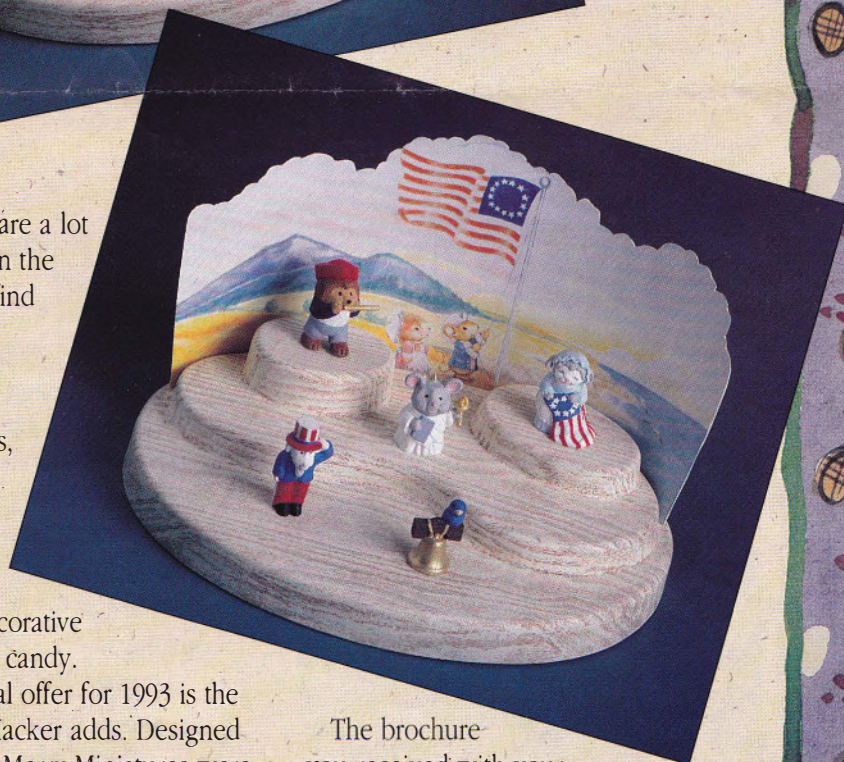
see the American flag proudly waving in the wind, as well as "amber waves of grain," and "purple mountain majesties."

Hacker emphasizes that all the '93 backdrops and themes are general enough to blend with the Merry Miniatures members already have in their collections.

"They'll complement both your old and new designs.

"We'll continue having themes in 1994," she says.

"Some of the 1993 designs might be reissued then, but most of the Merry Miniatures will be new."



The brochure you received with your August *Collector's Courier* shows the display stand, backdrops, and Merry Miniature theme groups for 1993 Valentine's Day, Easter and Fourth of July. These unique offerings are sure to bring the spirit of each season right into your home.

What a Good Idea for Christmas!

1



Man's best friend—and woman's too—deserves to have a tree. Trim a small tree with Keepsake Ornament dog designs and an assortment of red and green dog bones tied with ribbon. Display your dog's gifts underneath the tree including, of course, the new "Special Dog" ornament with your pooch's photo inside.

3



Your creative skills will shine as brightly as your culinary ones when you give gifts of your homemade Christmas cookies in tins trimmed with Keepsake Ornaments.

Attach a colorful bow to the lid of the tin, and tie a Keepsake Ornament onto the bow. The ornament, "A Santa-Full!," is an ideal choice since Santa's full tummy shows that he loves cookies, too.

2



You can celebrate both the holiday and your love of ornament collecting by wearing a sweatshirt decorated with Keepsake Miniature Ornaments. Begin by ironing a Christmas tree applique onto a sweatshirt. Then thread thin, satin ribbon through the eye hooks on your favorite mini ornaments, and tie the ribbon into bows.

Attach the ornaments to the tree design by sewing or pinning the bows to the fabric.

Individually sewn gold beads form the Christmas star.

4



"What do we give the mail carrier for Christmas?" If that's a yearly question at your house, the 1992 Keepsake Ornament offering has an ornament, "Polar Post" by Ed Seale, every mail carrier will love. Tie greenery and a bright bow onto your mailbox, and attach the ornament as a special Christmas surprise for this very important person.

5

Has someone at your place given you a holiday wish list with fishing items at the top? A new fishing creel decorated with the Keepsake Ornament, "Gone Wishing," will delight every angler. Or place the creel on your mantel or table to showcase the sport that warms a loved one's heart.



6

"Lord Chadwick" will help you ring in the holidays. Tie a bow to your favorite holiday sheet music, and attach this Special Edition bell to make your piano or music stand especially festive.



7

This graceful basket is the perfect holiday gift for someone with a "green thumb." There's everything the gardener needs—bulbs, seeds, gloves, tools, garden stakes, and the "Green Thumb Santa" dangling from a pretty ribbon-covered handle. What an incentive to get growin'!



8

Throw pillows you use every day can be transformed into a display for a cherished Collectible Series as well as a holiday home accessory. Tie ribbon around your pillows and attach ornaments to the ribbon.



9

This cowboy hat becomes a stylish Christmas accessory or a unique home decor item when you add the touch of a Keepsake Ornament.

The bright ribbon hat-band and Western-style ornament attached to it, "Santa's Roundup," make the hat fun to give and fun to wear.



10

Here's a dream machine for your dream machine! Decorate your car's rearview mirror with the "1957 Corvette," the "1966 Mustang," or any other Keepsake Ornament vehicle you have in your collection.



KEEPSAKE

SKETCHBOOK

Midwest Farm Produces Rich Memories for Keepsakes Leader

Images of a country Christmas come to life when Mary McClure, general manager of the Keepsakes department, describes memories from her childhood on a Midwestern farm.

"I used to feed my horses lumps of sugar as a special Christmas treat," she recalls. "I had two palominos I named Honey and Sugar, and a chestnut bay called Spice.

"Ours was a typical Missouri farm with cows, hogs, soybeans, and wheat," McClure continues. "My job was to drive up the milk cows. To do that, I rode the horses and tried to use my brothers' motor scooter."

McClure remembers participating in holiday plays at the one-room school she attended with two older brothers. "Our teacher selected plays with parts for all 13 students," she muses. "One year, my mother made elf costumes of red flannel for my brothers. One didn't like the way his hair stuck out under his cap, so he took little scissors and cut off his bangs. My mother admonished me not to do that.

"At home," adds McClure, "my great aunt fixed a little tree for my room, so I could have my very own Christmas tree. Now I see the equivalent when collectors decorate miniature trees for their little ones."

Today the Keepsakes general manager still enjoys traditions she learned as a child. "Quite often, I go out and cut my

own tree with friends. That's always fun, especially getting it home," she says. "The tree looks so small out in the field and so huge in the car!"

Like other collectors, McClure has personal favorites in this year's Keepsake Ornament line. The "1966 Mustang" in the "Classic American Cars" series suggests the family car she was occasionally permitted to drive.

"Rapid Delivery" reminds her of a raft trip through the Grand Canyon two years ago. "But our raft held 20 people," she says. "We spent lots of time drifting, interspersed with such excitement it made me think—I am paying money to do this!"

Asked about her role in the Keepsakes department, McClure responds: "Every day is different.

We handle not only Keepsake Ornaments but also Hallmark Galleries and Willitts Designs. I'm responsible for coordinating the various activities involved with getting a product from the idea stage into the hands of the collector.

"From the beginning, I've been fascinated that it is real people who really make these ornaments — sculpting and carving and assembling them," she says. "It's almost like magic.

"Our collectors are really energizing for us," she concludes.

"To see someone so excited about something that you worked to bring to life is really gratifying."



Mary McClure and her dog, McDuffy

Wishing you the merriest Christmas ever!

—The Keepsakes Staff



A Dutch Christmas Made More Memorable by Keepsake Ornaments

If you could look closely at Louis and Hanneke Hoogsteden's Christmas tree, you'd find plenty of Keepsake Ornaments even though the couple live in the Netherlands.

That's because they've been collecting Keepsake Ornaments for more than a decade, and Louis has been a Collector's Club member since 1987. Their celebration of Christmas is a cross between Dutch traditions and American ones Louis observed while in the United States on business.

**"I really do believe it's the most beautiful tree in all of our country."
Louis Hoogsteden**

Although many Club members from the U.S. may find it surprising, the Hoogstedens are far from alone in being international Keepsake Ornament collectors. The Club has members in a number of countries around the world, including Japan, Germany, Ireland, Mexico and New Zealand.

Louis, who owns a freight forwarding firm and an international trading company, says he got hooked on Keepsake Ornaments around 1982 while traveling in the U.S. He bought 10 ornaments that first year, the beginning of a collection that now stands at well over 500 and continues to grow. He has ordered about 90 designs from the 1992 ornament line.

For the Hoogstedens, like most of

their countrymen, the religious holiday comes on December 25. However, December 5 is celebrated as the traditional birthday of Santa Claus — "Sint Nicolaas" or "Sinterklaas" in the Dutch language. Because the sea and rivers have always been a central part of the country's history, Santa arrives by boat, according to Louis.

"Our Santa arrives approximately three weeks before December 5th in our country and is welcomed by thousands of children accompanied by their parents in the port of entry. As the old steamboat comes in from the sea, a band starts playing and all the children and adults begin singing "Sinterklaas liedjes" (Santa Claus carols). There must be 80 to 100 different songs," Louis explains by telephone from his home in 's-Gravenzande. It is a town of 19,000 located south of The Hague.

The Hoogstedens' Christmas tree always attracts the attention of holiday guests. Once the tree is up, it is decked with electric lights and Keepsake Ornaments. "I really do believe it's the most beautiful tree in all of our country," Louis says proudly.

In the past the couple decorated with more traditional Dutch decorations, including silver bells, animal and bird figures, and angel hair.

Friends and family are invited over for a big holiday party. They often bring others just to see the tree — always the center of attention. The gathering also serves as a birthday party, since Louis was born on December 5.

"Sometimes," Louis says, "some of our guests take a chair and sit by the tree just to look at the ornaments."



Donna Lee's Rodney Reindeer Takes Flight Once Again

"He started life as a beanbag," says Keepsake Ornament artist Donna Lee about her creation, Rodney Reindeer. In 1980, when Lee worked in a Hallmark department called gifts and occasions, she was given the assignment to design new beanbag ideas.

"I wanted to make something humorous," she says, "and Rodney is the result. I placed his eyes close together and gave him big, floppy 'hands and feet' so he would look goofy, which is how I feel about life — everything has some humor in it," she explains with a smile.

Little did the artist know at the time that she had created a new star. Soon after Rodney's debut as a beanbag figure in 1981, his public was clamoring for more. He appeared in numerous product offerings such as puzzles, cards, earrings, and beanies.

In 1987 Hallmark licensed Rodney for use by Burger King. Four meal packs and plush figures — Rodney, Rhonda, Ramona and Randy — were sold as a holiday promotion. Rodney even had two

of his own television commercials.

Lee's creation appeared for the first time as a Keepsake Ornament in 1989 when Bob Siedler sculpted "Rodney Reindeer" with flexible arms and legs. This year, the Club continues Rodney's success story with "Rodney Takes Flight," the Keepsake of Membership sculpted by Lee.

Collectors loved Rodney from the very beginning," remarks Lee. "People tell me they chuckle every time they look at him. I like that."



Collector's Quiz

Who am I? That's the question you're asked to answer after you read each of the verses in this quiz. The verses are actually riddles, and they describe either a Keepsake, Keepsake Magic or Keepsake Miniature Ornament in the 1992 offering.

The riddles were created by Linda Elrod from the Hallmark Creative Writing staff. She had a lot of fun writing these because she collects ornaments, too, especially the "Merry Olde Santa" series. The next issue of the *Courier* will unravel these riddles for you!

I spin around
And 'round and 'round,
The fun just never stops,
And when it comes to friendship,
I think I'm really tops!
WHO AM I?

I carry someone famous.
(Someone that you would know!)
My lights go "blink"
As down I sink
Into the H₂O!
WHO AM I?

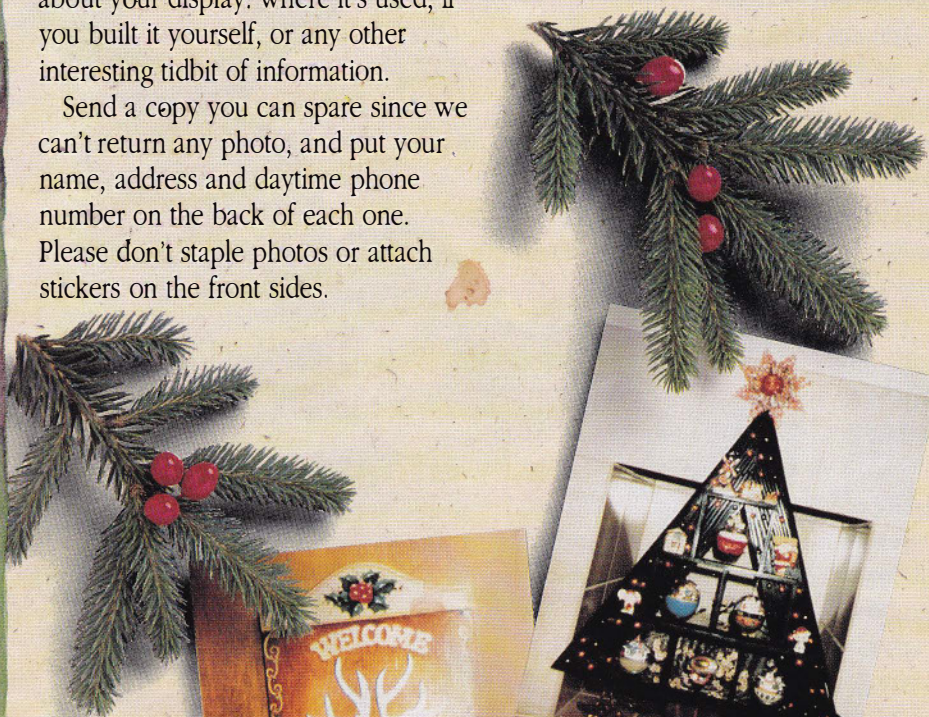
I'm pink and rather chubby,
I celebrate with zeal.
When I'm in holly,
Oh, by golly,
I could simply squeal!
WHO AM I?

Although I look like pastry,
Quite yummy wall to wall,
I'm also great
New real estate,
The sweetest home of all!
WHO AM I?

Courier Mail Box

We'd like to publish photos of your holiday decorations in the *Courier*. Now's the time to take snapshots and send them to us. Please remember to tell us about your display: where it's used, if you built it yourself, or any other interesting tidbit of information.

Send a copy you can spare since we can't return any photo, and put your name, address and daytime phone number on the back of each one. Please don't staple photos or attach stickers on the front sides.



I painted this wooden reindeer sign. It hangs on my door, and each year I add another reindeer ornament to it. At the bottom are four designs from the "Reindeer Champs" series.
Ruth Tanner
Warner Robins, Georgia

This is our sound-and-motion Christmas tree. We couldn't get the full benefit of the ornaments on our evergreen tree, so my husband made this special display.

Joan King
Fountain Hills,
Arizona



My engineering background came in handy when I built this display house for my light-and-motion ornaments. The house encourages viewing by family and friends and also protects the ornaments.
Donald Sweatland
Warsaw, Indiana

Club News

Here are a few reminders about Collector's Club deadlines and happenings we know you wouldn't want to forget!

The last day to purchase a 1992 Club membership — including gift memberships — is December 31, 1992.

Both 1992 Limited Editions are available only as long as orders do not exceed the published edition sizes. If you have questions about the availability of these ornaments, call Club headquarters.

The deadline for ordering the lighted Members Only ornament, "Santa's Club List," is May 1, 1993.

Our official Club membership year is now based on the calendar year — going to the end of December rather than the end of February. You'll be receiving more information on this change and other improvements we are planning for future Club programs.

Also, note that the next issue of the *Collector's Courier* will be published in early March rather than February. Both the *Courier* and the 1993 *Dream Book* commemorating the 20th anniversary of Keepsake Ornaments will be mailed to you at that time.

NEED TO CONTACT THE CLUB?

If you need to notify the Club of a change in your address or wish to send us a letter, you can write to us at:
Hallmark Cards, Inc.
Hallmark Keepsake Ornament
Collector's Club # 161
P.O. Box 412734
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