

COLLECTOR'S COURIER

A COLLECTOR'S DREAM 1997 Dream Book Debuts

For Keepsake Ornament Collector's Club members it may be the most anticipated publication of the year. It's the *Dream Book*, of course! With its arrival in the Courier mailing every year around this time, Club members get a chance to see the new Keepsake Ornaments and Hallmark Collectibles for the first time.

There's good reason to be excited this year with the introduction of Keepsake Ornaments featuring Disney characters (both new friends and old favorites)*, nine exciting Special Issue programs, a selection of culturally diverse designs, and an expanded offering of sports and Collector's Series ornaments.

But what many collectors may find most appealing is a greater emphasis on traditional and inspirational themes in 1997.

"We've listened to collectors who have told us they want more religious and classic holiday-themed ornaments," explains Keepsakes Marketing Manager



Michelle Ostermueller. "That's why we've increased the number of traditional and inspirational ornaments for 1997."

The new Collector's Series ornaments are intended to offer something for everyone, Michelle explains. "Collectors sometimes tell us we have too many series, but we're not expecting collectors to buy every one." She goes on to say, "We want to welcome more collectors into our collecting family by offering a wide variety of collectible themes. That's one of the things that makes Keepsake Ornaments

unique. Where else can

BARBIE™ meet Luke Skywalker™?

Just collect what you love!"

One thing collectors will notice in this year's *Dream Book* is that there is no separate section for Keepsake Magic Ornaments or Showcase Ornaments. "Collectors

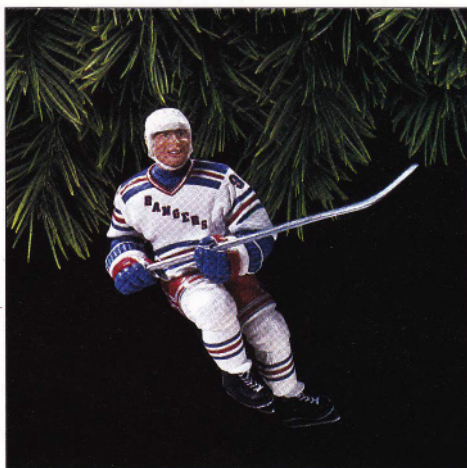
continued on inside front cover

*Look for a feature on the new Disney Keepsake Ornaments in an upcoming *Courier*.

Inside This Issue:

- BEHIND THE SCENES WITH NELLO WILLIAMS
- STAR WARS™ EXCITEMENT
- 1997 SPECIAL EVENTS





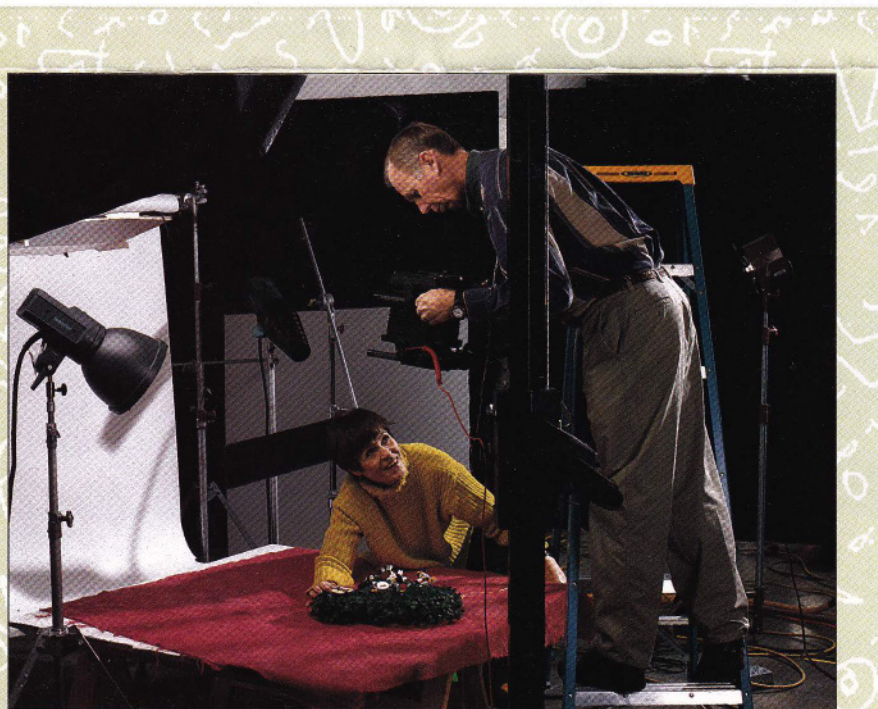
told us they'd like to see ornaments of a certain theme or subject matter shown together rather than separated into formats such as Showcase and Magic," Michelle explains. "We still have Keepsake Ornaments that feature light, motion and sound as well as the unique materials and subject matter of Showcase Ornaments. We're just not dividing them into separate categories this year."

The most important element of the 1997 Keepsake Ornaments and Hallmark Collectibles line is the emphasis on products that tell a story. "Every ornament has a story," says Keepsake Ornament Editor Lynn Paxson. "Collectors can see the story in the ornament design and read about it on the back of the ornament box."

Lynn reminds collectors to check the back of the box for information on what to expect from a particular Collector's Series or to enjoy a special story or verse. She also shares inside information on some of the 1997 Keepsake Ornaments in the "It's a Whole New Year!" article in this issue of the *Courier*.

Be sure to look for ornament-collecting authority and historian Clara Johnson Scroggins' "Collector's Choice" ornament this year and a listing of her favorite 1997 "Top Picks" in the *Dream Book*.

We look forward to hearing about your favorites, too. Enjoy!



CREATING A DREAM

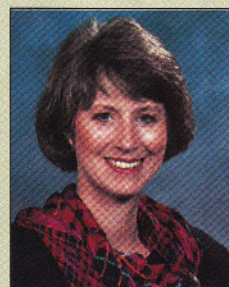
With more than three million copies of the *Dream Book* printed each year, it's not only a "dream," it's a best seller! Helping to create that dream are photo stylists (shown here preparing for a photo shoot), photographers, designers, editors, marketing executives, planners, printers and distributors. The 1997 *Dream Book* team was led by Designer Kate Marts and Editor Christie Kennard.



YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE

As we begin our new Club year this March, I want to thank you for making a difference. By taking the time to fill out surveys, writing to the Club with ideas, and voicing your opinions through your Hallmark retailers, you've let us know how we can serve you better.

Throughout 1997 you'll see several of your suggestions implemented in our Club programs. For example, we've increased the number of Artists On Tour events from eight to ten so we can reach more members. The National Club will also continue to host local club meetings across the country.



Marsha Cain

Based on your product suggestions, the 1997 membership ornaments are once again coordinated around a holiday theme—*The Night Before Christmas*. And, we've added a Tender

Touches Club Edition

Ornament for 1997.

To help ensure we deliver the best service to our members, we've also welcomed a new member to our Club team. Marsha Cain joined the Club last fall and has been working hard on improving customer service.

So, please keep those letters and surveys coming! You really are making a difference.

Happy Collecting!

Lynn Wylie

Lynn Wylie
Manager, National Keepsake Ornament
Collector's Club

INSPIRED BY YOU!

Members' Feedback Impacts 1997 Club

The 1997 Collector's Club programs have been inspired by the people who know collecting best—Club members!

"The feedback and suggestions we receive from Club members helped us plan the 1997 Club membership offer," explains Lynn Wylie, National Keepsake Ornament Collector's Club manager. "We've made changes and improvements based on what Club members have told us is most important to them."

In 1996 the Club developed the membership offering around a theme for the very first time with *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*®. The feedback from collectors was so positive that the 1997 kit was also designed around a theme—this time celebrating the 175th anniversary of the classic poem, *The Night Before Christmas* (see "Behind the Scenes," below.)

Club members also tell us the main reason they join the Club is for the exclusive ornaments. That's why 1997 members will receive four membership ornaments in their membership kit.

"Our members have also told us they want compelling Club Edition Ornaments,"

Lynn says. "We continue to strive to deliver this with BARBIE™, Kiddie Car Classics, and—in 1997—with the addition of a Tender Touches design which has been enthusiastically requested by collectors." The 1997 Club Edition Ornaments begin shipping to retailers in June 1997.

Suggestions from Club members have also resulted in two additional Artists On Tour events in 1997 so the Club can reach more members in more places. Plus, the national Club will be sponsoring local club events across the country. (Be sure to see the special

events insert which is enclosed with this issue of the *Courier* and the special events article on page 7 for more information.)

"I'm excited about the 1997 Club year because I know we'll be offering more of what members have told us is important to them," Lynn says. "We really appreciate the feedback we receive—and we're listening!"



BEHIND THE SCENES



A
Conversation
with Keepsake
Ornament
Artist
Nello Williams

How did you decide which scenes from *The Night Before Christmas* to portray in the 1997 Keepsake of Membership Ornaments?

I wanted to sculpt four ornaments in chronological order to take you from the

beginning to the end of the poem. And, I wanted to incorporate actual phrases from the poem into each design. Next, I went through the entire poem to find lines that were especially visual—the ones that create a picture in your mind each time you read them. One of my favorites has always been Santa's belly shaking like a "bowl full of jelly"!

What's unique about your portrayal of these classic scenes?

Each ornament has an architectural element as part of its design. There's a fireplace in "Ready for Santa"; a window frame, arch and part of the exterior and interior walls in "Away to the Window"; an arched window behind "Jolly Old Santa"; and a chimney in "Happy Christmas to All."

I also wanted to carry over a character into each design. If you look closely, you'll see that the little mouse appears in every

ornament. I wanted to add that special touch for collectors to discover.

What appealed to you most about sculpting these ornaments?

I wanted to do some things that were completely new in these, such as in "Away to the Window" where you can look through the window from the poet's bedroom and then turn the ornament around to see his expression of wonder from outside the house. I also thought adding the optional lighting effect behind the moon in "Happy Christmas to All" was something I hadn't really seen before.

Plus, I just love Santa Claus. He represents goodness and kindness, he's jolly—I like people like that! When I read *The Night Before Christmas*, it's easy for me to put myself in the place of the narrator. That way I get a chance to imagine meeting Santa Claus myself!

IT'S A WHOLE NEW YEAR!

Artists Share Stories Behind 1997 Designs

With more than 200 new Keepsake Ornaments and Merry Miniatures® figurines being offered each year, collectors often ask: How do the artists come up with so many ideas? Here are some insights into designs from the 1997 line.



Michigan J. Frog

How does Keepsake Ornament artist Robert Chad know so much about the cartoon characters he loves to sculpt?

"I didn't have a little brother when I was growing up, says Chad. "I had television!

"Probably the reason I do art now is because I watched so many cartoons when I was a kid," he continues. "The important things to me were cartoons, candy, and toys—that's no different from any kid's list." Chad joined the Keepsake Ornament Artists' Studio ten years ago. "For the longest time I was pushing the idea of doing Warner Brothers' characters," he recalls. "The first idea that I handed in was Marvin the Martian. I didn't even bother to suggest Michigan J. Frog because I thought no one would recognize him. He was only in one cartoon."

As it turned out, the dapper frog is now a TV network star, and Chad was asked to sculpt the 1997 Keepsake Ornament!



The Sky's the Limit

One of the ten new Keepsake Ornament series reflects Lynn Norton's lifelong interest in airplanes.

"Some of my earliest memories were being out in the yard with my mother, hanging up clothes, and hearing sonic booms," Lynn recalls. "All of us baby boomers

remember those sonic booms.

"One of the most exciting things about being alive in this century is that mankind learned how to fly and leave the planet—it's incredible when you think what has happened in this century!"

Lynn says it is the romance of the machinery and the beauty of technology that inspired this series, which will portray historic aircraft. "The Flight at Kitty Hawk" is the first to arrive.

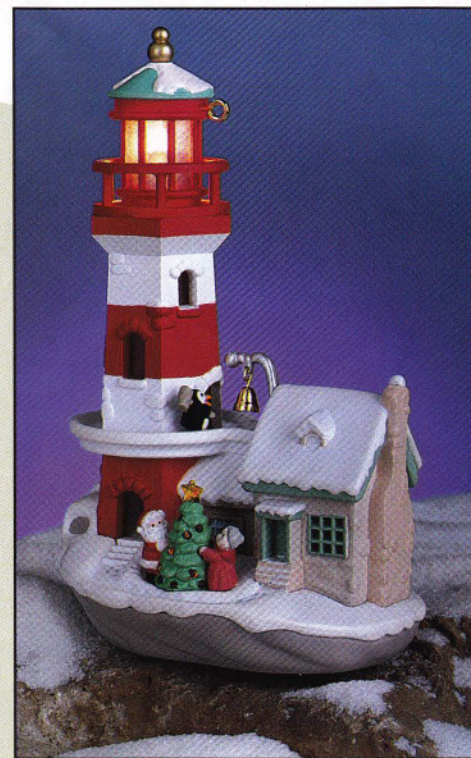
"Because I have been a model maker since early childhood," says the sculptor, "I want to bring fine detailing as far as possible into the ornament field. I'm putting in levels of detail you don't expect to find."

Lighthouse Greetings

Just as if you were at sea, a flashing beacon will help you get your bearings and locate this new series of Keepsake Magic Ornaments.

"Our 1994 'Candy Cane Lookout' ornament was very popular with collectors," says the sculptor, John (Collin) Francis. "They kept asking me, 'when are you going to do another lighthouse?' Now I can tell them!"

One of the first decisions the artist had to make was whether to duplicate specific lighthouses or to develop his own designs. "I decided to create original designs that represent the styling and colors of real lighthouses," he says. "Each year the lighthouse will represent a different area of the country—but no matter what our research shows, Santa and Mrs. Claus will always be the lightkeepers!"



The 1997 ornament is a composite of lighthouses from the northeastern coast of the United States.



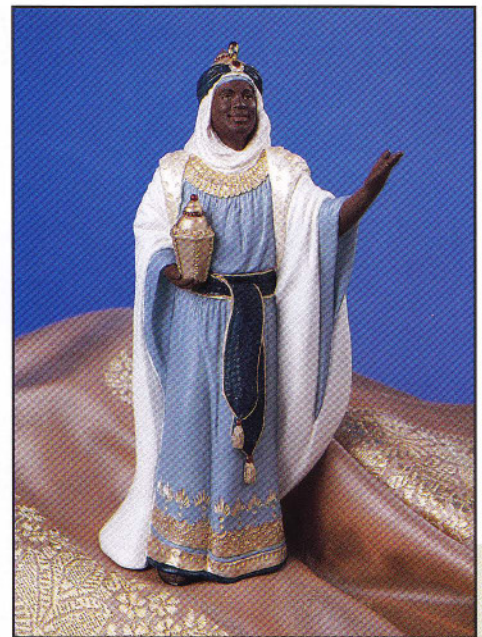
Howdy Doody

"Did you know that Howdy Doody had 48 freckles—one for each state when the show

started in 1947?" asks Keepsake Ornament Studio Artist Tracy Larsen. "We can't get 48 freckles on an ornament, but I wanted to be as authentic as possible. The lettering matches the original logo, and we kept the plaid shirt even though that means extra steps in production."

Tracy originally thought of designing the ornament as a marionette. "I added the TV set because 1947 was about the time that TV really began," he explains. "Then I showed Howdy Doody as a character popping out of the TV, to give it some action. Besides, Buffalo Bob thought of Howdy Doody as a real actor—not a marionette."

Although Tracy talks like a kid from Doodyville's Peanut Gallery, he wasn't born until 1960, the year the program ended. His knowledge comes from researching an idea for a Hallmark greeting card.



Legend of Three Kings

"King Noor" is the first in a collection that will continue in 1998 and 1999.

"At first, I had thought of showing the kings with traditional gifts," says Keepsake Ornament Studio Artist Patricia Andrews. "Then, when the editor, Maria Gonzalez, and I were talking, she thought it would be fun to have a new legend written. She worked with Sharon Valteau from Hallmark's creative writing staff. They developed a wonderful story with unique gifts that I incorporated into my designs. The writer did a lot of research on names, which parts of the world the kings might have come from, and which gifts would have been important at that time."

Patricia continues, "I wanted to create kings that had beauty and elegance...to portray their nobility by their clothing and posture and faces. They could have been very important men."

King Noor, whose name means "light," carries a lamp. A collector's card with the complete legend is enclosed with the ornament. The designs complement "Kindly Shepherd" (1996) and "Heaven's Gift" (1995).



Peter Pan Set

The 1997 Spring collection of Merry Miniatures® figurines includes the Story Time set, Peter Pan, sculpted by Keepsake Ornament Studio Artist Sue Tague. When she began to develop the set, Sue decided to portray the characters as bears.

"We wanted to differentiate them from people's preconceived notion of what they should look like," she remembers. "The idea of using bears came from the phrase 'Peter Panda,' and the popularity of bears confirmed the choice!"

Sue says that developing the characters came easily to her, because of her background as a storybook illustrator. The five-piece set includes Peter Pan, Captain Hook, the pirate ship, and the Darling children. Tinkerbell is perched on Peter Pan's cap.

Editor's Note: Sue began sculpting Merry Miniatures long before she came to the Keepsake Ornament Artists' Studio last year. She has more than four-dozen designs to her credit, dating back to 1974.

STAR WARS™ RETURNS!

Keepsake Ornaments Cause Excitement



With a major theatrical release of the (STAR WARS™) trilogy planned for this year, STAR WARS enthusiasts are already gearing up to celebrate the 20th year of the original film.

The excitement began in 1996 with the "Millennium Falcon™" Keepsake Magic Ornament and "The Vehicles of STAR WARS" three-piece Keepsake Miniature Ornament set. This year, STAR WARS collectors and Keepsake Ornament collectors are eagerly anticipating the four STAR WARS Special Issue Ornaments that will arrive in Hallmark stores in time for the Keepsake Ornament Premiere in July.

"There's been a very high level of anticipation among STAR WARS collectors for the Hallmark Keepsake Ornaments," says Steve Sansweet, author of three books about STAR WARS



memorabilia and owner of the largest private collection of STAR WARS memorabilia in the world. "These orna-

ments will be highly sought after because they're dated, and they're only being issued one year."

The 1997 Keepsake Ornament line features four Special Issue Ornaments based on the original STAR WARS movie. Heading the cast of favorites is "Luke Skywalker™," the first in the STAR WARS Collector's Series.

Luke's charming sidekicks—the best-known team of droids in the Rebel Alliance—are known as C-3PO™ and R2-D2™. The team is so inseparable it's hard to imagine them as anything but a two-piece Keepsake Miniature Ornament set!

Perhaps one of the most lovable

STAR WARS characters, the diminutive Jedi Master, "Yoda™," is being featured as a Keepsake Ornament that complements the STAR WARS Collector's Series.

A dramatic Keepsake Magic Ornament, "Darth Vader™" is cloaked in black and looks every bit the threat that he is to those in the Rebel Alliance. The Imperial Commander's light saber glows continuously and, with just the press of a button, you can hear the voice of James Earl Jones from the movie saying: "The Force is with you, young Skywalker. But you are not a Jedi yet!"

DID YOU KNOW?

- The original STAR WARS movie was introduced in 1977. A major theatrical release of the STAR WARS trilogy is planned for this year, the 20th year of the film.
- STAR WARS trilogy videos released in 1995 sold 22 millions units, making it the best-selling live-action video ever.
- A new STAR WARS novel came out in 1991. It jumped to No. 1 on the *New York Times* Best Sellers list in its second week.

NEW KIDDIE CARS AND SIDEWALK CRUISERS



Four new Kiddie Car Classics and two Sidewalk Cruisers will be rolling into participating Hallmark Gold Crown stores this May.

Among the new additions are the 1939 GARTON® Ford Station Wagon shown in the photo left (complete with removable surf-board!); the 1940 Gendron "Red Hot" Roadster, second in the Winner's Circle Collector's Series (also shown, left); and the snazzy 1960 Murray® Blaz-O-Jet tricycle.

With its contoured seat and teardrop-style fenders, the sleek, 1939 American National Pedal Bike rounds out the spring-time Sidewalk Cruisers introduction.

The 1937 GARTON® Ford Luxury

Edition also debuts in May. This special car features pin striping, shiny headlights, hub-caps, front bumpers, and side fenders, and is limited to an edition of 24,500. And don't miss the 1956 Murray® Golden Eagle Limited Edition with its trunk compartment, plaid seat and working spotlight! It's made in an edition of 29,500.

Let the good times roll!

Editor's Note: The shiny "Red Hot" Roadster will get hearts racing this June when it will be featured in a Hallmark national register-to-win promotion. Watch for details in the May issue of the Courier!

1997 SPECIAL EVENTS

More Chances to Join the Fun!

According to National Club Assistant Manager Tex Ann Kraft, the 1997 special events have been designed so that the Club can visit more Club members in more locations.

"We chose our 1997 event locations based on where the largest number of national Club and local club members live," Tex Ann explains. So, the Club will be revisiting some cities as well as adding new tour stops this year. In fact, the Club has added two more Artists On Tour events this year—for a total of 10. As Tex Ann says, "Our intent is to reach more Club members in more places and hopefully make it easier for some of you to attend. We want to go where our Club members are."

Event Locations

Club members have asked the national Club to announce the Artists On Tour event locations as early as possible.

For 1997, the Club was able to confirm locations in time to announce them in the enclosed 1997 Special Events flier. "Details about the events and the registration process will be coming in the May *Courier*," Tex Ann says, "but the enclosed information should help you to begin planning."

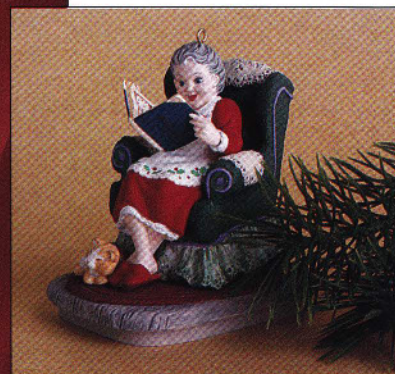
Artists On Tour Activities

"In 1996 we concentrated on the top four activities members told us they wanted," says National Club Manager Lynn Wylie. Meeting the artists and having ornaments signed, getting the chance to purchase event-exclusive products, having register-to-win opportunities, and the camaraderie of meeting other collectors were favorite activities listed on previous exit surveys.

"This year Club members have also said they'd like more activities throughout the day," Lynn says. "And that's just what we'll be providing!" Details will be announced in the May *Courier*.

Local Club Events

Due to the success of the 1996 Local Club Tour, 16 local club events will once



(above) "Mrs. Claus's Story" is a complement to the Studio Edition.

The 1997 Studio Edition, "Trimming Santa's Tree," (left) celebrates the talents of the Keepsake Ornament Studio Artists.

Note: "Mrs. Claus's Story" and "Trimming Santa's Tree" will only be available at 1997 Club events.

again be held across the country in 1997. "Ten of these events will be held in the Artists On Tour cities the Friday night before the Artists On Tour event," Tex Ann says. "That way, local club members who are already traveling to an Artists On Tour event will have an opportunity to participate."

The remaining six local club events will be held in early summer in cities that have a large number of local club members. "Rest assured we'll have fun together in all the cities we visit!" Tex Ann says. Details on the 1997 local club events will be provided in upcoming issues of the *Collectively Speaking* local club newsletter.

1997 Studio Edition

The Keepsake Signature Collection ended in 1996. "With a limited number of signing events each year, it was becoming more difficult for collectors to be able to get all the pieces signed by all the artists," Lynn Wylie explains.



For 1997, a new direction is being taken with "Trimming Santa's Tree." This Studio Edition is still a collaborative work that celebrates the talents of the Keepsake Ornament Studio Artists (19 this year!). "But this is not positioned as a piece to get signed," Lynn says. "To make it more convenient for collectors, we've already added the printed signatures of the artists to the underside of the piece."

"Mrs. Claus's Story," a companion piece to "Trimming Santa's Tree" will also be offered at 1997 Club events. It portrays Mrs. Claus relaxing in her favorite chair as she reads *The Night Before Christmas* to the elves. It carries the signatures of Keepsake Ornament Studio Artists Joanne Eschrich and Kristina Kline, who sculpted the piece for Club members.

MAILBOX

Memo

If you collect Keepsake Ornaments and like to have fun, you're the perfect candidate for a local club! We now have more than 300 local clubs across the U.S. and Canada. And yes, that includes Alaska and Hawaii! Local club members participate in charitable activities, share information and decorating ideas, attend national Club events, and enjoy the camaraderie of others who love collecting.

If you'd like a list of local clubs in your area, please write to the Club address shown to the right of this memo. Or, you can write to the Club to request a packet of information on starting a new local club.

Get involved in a local club and share the joys of collecting!

Assistant National Collector's Club Manager

CONTACTING THE CLUB

If you need to notify the Club of a change in your address, wish to send us a letter, request information on starting a local club, or renew your membership, contact us at the address below.

Hallmark Keepsake Ornament
Collector's Club
P.O. Box 419034
Kansas City, MO 64141-6034

Q & A

Q . Is it too late to order my 1996 Club Editions?

A . Not yet, but your order must be postmarked by **May 1, 1997**, so don't delay!

Q . How do I order my 1996 Club Editions?

A . Take the Club Edition order form you received in your kit to your local Hallmark retailer. (Orders can only be placed through your local Hallmark retailer.)

Q . What happens after I order?

A . Once you place your order, the Club

will send you a confirmation postcard. The postcard lists the ornaments ordered and the retailer location. It also lists a time frame in which you can expect a call from the retailer. Once the ornaments arrive, your retailer will notify you.

If you have placed your order and haven't heard from your retailer, you should contact them *now*. The May 1 deadline is almost here!

Q . I have ordered one of the Club Edition Ornaments and I no longer have my order form. Can I still order the other two designs?

A . Just ask your retailer to assist you or write to the Club address listed above to request a new form.

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TO RENEW OR NOT TO RENEW?

Because Collector's Club fees are paid annually, renewal notices are sent to all members at the same time regardless of the date you joined. This year the renewal notices and multi-year kits began mailing to members in early spring.

1997 memberships will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis, so in order to be among the first to receive your membership kit and Club Edition order form, it's best to renew as early as possible.

