



T.J.'s Journal

by: Tanya J. Cook

"What is the most commonly asked question at this time of the year? No, it's not 'Have you completely frozen to death yet?' although it's a close second. The two questions that tie are: 'Have you got all your Christmas shopping done?' and 'Are you ready for Christmas?'"

A few years ago, almost thirty by now, I embraced Jewish beliefs and traditions. I have yet to find anywhere in the Bible that directs one to observe the birth of Christ, or any other birthday, for that matter. The origin of what is known as Christmas began hundreds of years before the birth of Christ in ancient Babylon. The wise men brought gifts to Christ, but it is believed He was about three years old, and the exact date is unknown. Christ was actually born in mid- to late fall. Hey, don't argue with me, just do the research!

However, I'm very tolerant of others' beliefs, and expect the same from others. I feel that the relationship between man and his personal choice of how to worship God is the most, dear, precious, and sacred of any relationship in the universe. This is the driving force that founded America.

There are a lot of pros and cons concerning this time of year. The cons: the crime rate is higher, the suicide rate almost doubles, and people spend enough that it takes the rest of the year to pay for it. Much of the expense is put on credit cards. The credit card holders may later seek the services of credit card reduction services to negotiate a deal with the "creditors to lower the amount owed on the card. I know from experience, most of these reduction services are total rip-offs and should be arrested.

There are quite a few pros to this time of the year, as well: the weather is picturesque, everyone has a willingness to be more considerate of his fellow man, and it brings families together. All of these are very good things.

I'm usually asked what I'd like to have for Christmas. The things I'd like to have at any time of the year can't necessarily be bought or wrapped up or is even obtainable. Some are conveniences, pieces of nostalgia, and even moralistic virtues.

The list goes like this: (those over forty will really like it) a child-proof lid adults can remove, larger eyes on needles, not having to spout to read, jeans that fit like they used to, pop in a glass bottle (that costs a dime), first-run movies with dollar admission, put the TV and type shows back on the networks, bring back disco and rock-n-roll, 45s, auto makers to re-make the classic cars; to use to do the things we used to without taking a handful of aspirin and going to bed.



Points East

By: Ike Adams

Old Blue is not a bad dog when it comes to barking at the sky or the moon or keeping you awake all night if the motors don't sound right out there on the main road. In fact, he's not a bad dog for anything and about the only thing he's good for is to meet you at the end of the drive and wag all over and wonder where the good feed is.

And he does crave the good stuff even though he is prone to share it with stray cats and possums.

More than once he has climbed into the UPS driver's truck and attempted to hitch a ride out of Lowell

Branch in search of a better land because he is not happy with the fare he gets delivered here in the back yard.

And we are talking top of the line ALPO. We are talking about leftover burger and steak with the finest eating still-warm baked potatoes and great hunks of meat loaf discarded by the rest of the family and warm gravy poured atop the ALPO. Some times I wish I could go out and share a meal with old Blue.

Ungrateful that he is.

There's not a better-fed dog in Kentucky than old Blue. He eats better than I do, on average, his meals cost more than mine.

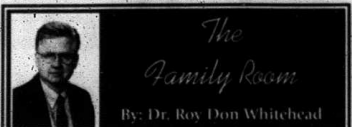
But let a possum or a coon come seeking, round to raid the garbage cans and Blue will urge them on. Not a bark. Not a whimper. I've actually seen him using his front paws to pile up spaghetti that wasn't sauced to suit him, for a big blue possum and then put the possum on the back with his front paws as it waddled away after devouring the meal.

Blue and Possums get along real well so do he and stray cats.

But what do you get a dog like Blue for Christmas if you don't want him to run off with the mail man?

Time is running out. I need to know.

Email me: ikeadams@aol.com.



The Family Room

By: Dr. Roy Don Whitehead

"I was five nights before Christmas and all through the house, not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse. When up on the wall there arose such a clatter, I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter." The clatter was from the carbon monoxide detector that is on the wall outside my bedroom. Its ear piercing alarm announced the presence of dangerous levels of carbon monoxide in the house.

After a quick consultation with the family, we decided to evacuate the house. I called 911 and the Somerset Fire Department was on the way.

The two firemen who responded to the call tested the air inside the house and found the carbon monoxide level was 64. This is not good. Further testing the next day revealed that the level in the garage was more than 200, a near toxic level.

As we headed for a motel to spend the night, the firemen ventilated the house and called the Somerset Gas Service. The gas man found that there were several leaks in the exhaust pipe leading from the furnace. This was allowing carbon monoxide to accumulate in the house. He turned off the gas to the furnace until we could arrange for repairs. Thanks to the fire department and the gas company the carbon monoxide is gone.

As I pondered these events later, I realized how lucky we were. Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas that can kill. Since we cannot see it, smell it or taste it, there is no warning. That carbon monoxide detector saved our lives.

A friend of ours had a similar experience several years ago. She came closer to death than we did. Something awakened her early one morning. She realized that she felt sick and started for the phone. She could barely crawl but managed to call 911 before she passed out. The fire department had to break down her door to rescue her and her family. The problem: carbon monoxide. It almost killed her.

We have had a smoke detector at

our house for many years. A few years ago I read about the dangers of carbon monoxide and decided to install a detector. I put it near our bedroom. As it turns out, that decision saved our lives. A smoke detector and a carbon monoxide detector are two different things.

Our Readers Write

Dear Editor,

For a person overcoming a drug or alcohol addiction this time of year can often be difficult. There are too many reminders of past transgressions against friends and family. There is also damage that has been caused to oneself, but probably the most difficult obstacle is the amount of alcohol consumed by others during the Holiday Season.

Being a legal drug, alcohol is so socially acceptable yet unbelievably destructive to our society at the same time. According to the latest survey on national drug use statistics there are approximately 14 million Americans that have alcohol problems, let alone those addicted to other drugs. Add on to that the damage caused and lives lost through drunk driving and other accidents and domestic abuse.

A common dilemma for many that are in the recovering process or that have been sober now for years is whether or not to participate in the numerous parties this time of year. There are office Christmas parties, dinners, and of course New Year parties, all of which typically have lots of alcohol.

The decision not to drink can be simple if one has completed full rehabilitation, but for those that have only received partial treatments or who don't feel in control of their lives again, going into agreement with the group that it is okay to have a couple drinks can lead to devastating consequences. For example, someone

The smoke detector will not pick up the carbon monoxide danger. That takes a separate detector that is specifically designed to sense the presence of carbon monoxide.

Based on my experience of the past weekend, I strongly recommend that you install both types of detectors in your home. I can kill you, but so can carbon monoxide. The latter cannot be detected by human senses, you can be dead before you ever know there is a danger.

The discount store and your local hardware store will have detectors. You can also order them over the Internet. This is a decision to put off until later. That life you save may be your own.

that was maybe addicted to cocaine or methamphetamine could justify it by saying that "alcohol won't really my problem," only to find themselves in an altered state of mind and make more unhealthy decisions such as "one line couldn't hurt," or "I should celebrate my sobriety."

This may sound absurd to some, but it is a common mistake made by many people every year, which sends them immediately back down into a dwindling spiral of addiction once again.

Since drug and alcohol addiction affects the lives of every single American in one way or another, it would benefit us all to be aware of what we're doing to ourselves and others at such events. Encouraging someone to "relax" or "let loose" and have a drink isn't helping them, it's destructive.

So let's ensure that we all have a happy and healthy Holiday Season and look out for each other. Of course, if you find someone having problems with substance abuse there are effective solutions available by contacting Narconon Arrowhead for help at 1800-468-6933 or log on to www.stopaddiction.com.

Narconon is a worldwide drug rehabilitation and education program now operating in 36 countries. The program uses the drug-free methodology developed by L. Ron Hubbard and 70% of its graduates remain drug

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Merry Christmas from Hannah, Xenia and the rest of the gang

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