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WELCOME TO THE SHOW!

Good news! My Dad called last night. He just finished assembling my new bike from Christmas 1978.

PRESIDENTIAL WIT & WISDOM ([click here to buy the book](#))

(None on the weekends.)

"I always remember an epitaph which is in the cemetery at Tombstone, Arizona. It says 'Here lies Jack Williams. He done his damnedest.' I think that is the greatest epitaph a man can have – when he gives everything that is in him to do the job he has before him. That is all you can ask of him and that is what I have tried to do." – Harry S. Truman

BIBLE VERSE OF THE DAY

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord." ---Luke 2:8-11

Matthew 19:26 = Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

[Zechariah said,] "Praise be to the Lord, God of Israel, because he has come and has redeemed his people. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he said through his holy prophets long ago."
— [Luke 1:68-70](#)

HEARTLIGHT DAILY VERSE, PRAYER & THOUGHT

(From VerseOfTheDay.com)

But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. — 1 Corinthians 12:18-20

Thought: The Apostle Paul reminds us that God assigns our roles in the Body of Christ. Several principles interact with God's choice. First, be faithful in what God has given you to do — until we are faithful in/with little things, he will not entrust us with big ones (Luke 16:10-13). Second, if we don't use what he has given us, it will be taken away (Matt. 25:14-30). Third, we reap what we sow — sinful or irresponsible behavior can create consequences that limit the effectiveness of our service (Gal. 6:7-8). Bottom line — let's be faithful with what God has given us, let's serve him when given new opportunities, and let's honor him with our choices so that Satan cannot use our failure to interfere with our service!

Prayer: Dear Father and LORD of heaven and earth, please help me see my opportunities to serve in your Kingdom. Please grow my effectiveness in your service so that I can bring you glory and be a blessing to the Body of Christ. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The Thoughts and Prayers for Today's Verse are written by Phil Ware. You can email questions or comments to phil@heartlight.org.

"BIRTHDAY VERSE" OF THE DAY (*The chapter and verse correspond to the month and day!*)

Romans 12:19 NIV = Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

TODAY IS TUESDAY – DECEMBER 19, 2017

(NOTE: Some holidays may be duplicated due to various calendars reporting conflicting dates)

WEIRD, WACKY, STRANGE, ZANY, ODD, BIZARRE, QUIRKY, UNUSUAL HOLIDAYS!

THERE ARE ONLY 05 SHOPPING DAYS UNTIL CHRISTMAS.

Today is **NATIONAL OATMEAL MUFFIN DAY**. ***Do you know the muffin man? The muffin man? The muffin man? Do you know the muffin man? He lives on Drury Lane! ([audio clip](#))

Today is **CHOCOLATE PIZZA DAY**.

Today is **NATIONAL BUILD A SNOWMAN DAY**.

Today is **[E-MAIL SANTA CLAUS](#) JUST IN CASE HE DIDN'T GET YOUR LETTER DAY**.

TODAY IS ALSO...

NONE TODAY

COMING UP NEXT (*Just a list, we are not endorsing the holidays posted below. Find more holidays and link to their websites at [BrownieLocks.com](#)*)

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20

International Human Solidarity Day
Games Day
Mudd Day
National Sangria Day
Poet Laureat Day
World Day of Prayer and Action for Children

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21

Ann & Samantha Day (Summer & Winter Solstices. Also June 21)
Celebrate Short Fiction Day (Always on Winter Solstice)
Crossword Puzzle Day
Forefathers Day
Free Shipping Day (3rd Thursday at Participating Retailers)
Humbug Day
International Dalek Remembrance Day
National Flashlight Day (Shortest Day of The Year)
National Homeless Persons' Remembrance Day
National Re-gifting Day (3d Thursday)
Phileas Fogg Win A Wager Day
Short Girl Appreciation Day (Shortest day of the year)
World Peace Day/Winter Solstice
Winter (Winter Solstice) 11:28 AM EST
Yalda
Yule

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22

Be A Lover of Silence Day

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23

Festivus
Human Light Celebration

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24

Christmas Eve
Egg Nog Day

MONDAY, DECEMBER 25

A'Phabet Day or No "L" Day
Christmas
Christmas Pudding Day

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26

Boxing Day (Canada)
National Candy Cane Day
National Thank-you Note Day
National Whiner's Day

ON THIS DAY

45 B.C.: Julius Caesar popped in unannounced with 2,000 men for dinner at Cicero's country villa. Cicero wrote his friend Atticus that he entertained the group "in style," but that Caesar was not the sort of guest to whom you'd say, "Do please come again on your way back."

1776: Thomas Paine published his first "American Crisis" essay. He wrote, "These are the times that try men's souls."

1843: "A Christmas Carol," by Charles Dickens, was first published in England.

1922: 24-year-old Theresa Vaughn was tried for bigamy in England. In five years she had accumulated 62 husbands.

1927: George Scott and Frank Elliot became the only drivers ever to travel by car 4,200 miles across Canada without gasoline. They talked 168 passing motorists into towing their car, which did not have a motor.

1944: American Christian songwriter Andrew Robert Culverwell was born. He wrote "Born Again" and "Come On, Ring Those Bells."

1955: At Sun Records in Memphis, Carl Perkins recorded his original million seller "Blue Suede Shoes."

1957: Meredith Wilson's musical play "The Music Man" opened on Broadway.

1960: Frank Sinatra recorded "Ring-A-Ding-Ding" and "Let's Fall in Love" in his first session with his own record company, Reprise Records.

1973: Comedian Johnny Carson created a minor crisis when he mentioned during a Tonight Show monologue a news item that said toilet paper was disappearing from store shelves. Within a few days toilet paper actually became scarce in some areas.

1975: Advertising executive and storyteller C.W. McCall earned a gold record for his novelty hit "Convoy," a single about truck drivers and their run-ins with the law. It reached #1 on both the country and pop charts.

1980: Santa Claus robbed a bank in Berkeley, California, by threatening to blow it up. A short time later, police arrested a hefty 50-year-old man with a sack full of money, still wearing his Santa outfit.

1985: ABC Sports announced that it was severing ties with Howard Cosell and released him from all TV commitments. "The Mouth" continued on ABC Radio for another five years.

1989: The U.S. issued a patent (#4,887,552) to James Hayden of Cincinnati for his Electrically Lighted Dog Leash and Collar. Powered by a 9-volt battery, the leash device contributes to dog-walking safety after dark.

1995: Two bandits tried to rob Z's Sports Tap bar in Chicago where a police retirement party was underway. The 100 off-duty police officers arrested the suspects at the scene without a fight.

1997: "Titanic," the highest-grossing movie in history, opened in North American theaters.

1998: U.S. President Bill Clinton became only the second U.S. president to be impeached when the House of Representatives approved two articles of impeachment, charging him with perjury and obstruction of justice. In the subsequent trial, however, he was acquitted.

2001: Research by the Reno Gazette-Journal in Nevada determined the most effective way to get rid of a fruitcake is to drive over it with an SUV or kick it like a football. Dropping a fruitcake from the roof of a two-story building or shooting it with a submachine gun was not effective at all.

2003: Image designs for the new design for the Freedom Tower at the World Trade Center revealed a sloping spire to reach 1,776 feet.

TODAY IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY

1734: Count Nicolaus von Zinzendorf, founder of the modern Moravian church and a pioneer in ecumenism and missions, is recognized as a minister by the theology faculty of Tubigen, Germany.

1790: An interdenominational meeting opens in Philadelphia to create the First Day Society to strengthen Sunday observance.

1808: Death of Horatius Bonar a leading Scottish minister of his day and author of many hymns, such as "I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say."

1904: Sundar Singh sees a vision of Christ three days after burning a Bible, an act that left him so miserable he was preparing to throw himself under a train. The teenager immediately began to preach the gospel to others at great risk to himself. ³When we have left this life, we shall not have a second chance of bearing the cross for Christ.²

1947: The Dead Sea scrolls are discovered, and soon are recognized as one of the greatest archaeological finds of the twentieth century for the light they cast on scripture, and especially on the times of Christ.

1950: Bill Wallace, missionary surgeon to China, is taken captive in a pre-dawn raid by the Communists and placed in a cell where he is brutally interrogated as an American spy and finally murdered.

HOLLYWOOD, SPORTS AND CELEBRITY FIGURE BIRTHDAYS

- actress (Jody Lynch on "Party of Five", Lucy Hatcher on "The Practice") Marla Sokoloff 37 ([audio clip](#))
- actor (*Jarhead*, *Proof*, *The Day After Tomorrow*) Jake Gyllenhall 37
- actress (*Commando*, "Who's the Boss", "Melrose Place", "Charmed") Alyssa Milano 45 ([audio clip](#))
- actress (*Dude Where's My Car*, *Big Daddy*, *The Phantom*, *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*) Christy Swanson 47
- actress (Bette Porter on "The L Word", *The Grudge 2*, *Runaway Jury*, *Flashdance*, "The Chicago Code") Jennifer Beals 54
- actor (William Barnett on "That 70's Show", Ray Campbell on "Sister Sister", Venus Flytrap on "WKRP in Cincinnati") Tim Reid 73 ([audio clip](#))
- actress (*Because of Winn Dixie*, *Diary of a Mad Black Woman*, *Fried Green Tomatoes*, *The Help*) Cicely Tyson 84

BEE-BOP BIRTHDAYS

(Music Artist Birthdays From [SongFacts.com](#))

1894 : Paul Dessau

1915 : Charlie Ryan

1941 : Maurice White ([Earth, Wind & Fire](#))

1944 : Zal Yanovsky ([The Lovin' Spoonful](#))

1944 : Alvin Lee ([Ten Years After](#))

1945 : John McEuen ([Nitty Gritty Dirt Band](#))

1957 : Doug Johnson ([Loverboy](#))

1958 : Limahl ([Kajagoogoo](#))

1968 : Kevin Shepard (Tonic)

SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE (Answering questions that have plagued mankind for minutes!)

THE MEANING OF THE CANDY CANE?

Was the candy cane made as a representation of the story of Christ?

According to legend there was a candy maker who wanted to invent a candy that would tell the story of Jesus. First of all, he used a hard candy because Christ is the rock of ages. The flavor of the cane is peppermint, which is similar to hyssop. Hyssop is in the mint family and was used in the Old Testament for purification and sacrifice. Jesus is the pure Lamb of God, come to be a sacrifice for the sins of the world. The color white was used to represent the perfect purity of the spotless and sinless Son of God. A large red stripe was used to represent the blood that He shed upon the cross to cleanse us from our sins. Three thin red stripes were added to remind us of the stripes He received. Finally, the candy was made in the shape of a shepherd's staff to remind us that Jesus is the Good Shepherd. (Book, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996)

(As uplifting as this story is, it is actually FALSE. [Read the truth here.](#))

NEWS KICKERS

(None on weekends. Want a customizable version with your specific station tag, FREE? [Email me for more information!](#))

NEW NEWS KICKERS...

(Not posted on weekends and U.S. holidays.)

Sunday night, Fox aired "A Christmas Story Live!" and "USA Today's" less-than-stellar half-star review expressed that the show "shot its own eye out." ***Which was WAAAAY funnier than anything said during the live show.

Power is back on at America's busiest airport, Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson, after a power outage yesterday afternoon that stranded thousands of travelers and grounded 1,500 flights. ***People joyfully called relatives to gleefully say they couldn't make it for Christmas after all, now that they had the perfect excuse to get out of it.

Friday in Britain was Mad Friday, an evening in which Brits let their hair down and party into the night. It's been called the booziest night of the year, and every year there are examples of just how mad Mad Friday can be. Like the two men who had to be rescued when their car navigation took them into three feet of icy water. Or the guy who urinated on \$90 worth of instant noodles in a grocery store. ***Have these people not seen "The Purge"? It never ends well.

The US government apparently suspected the truth was out there after all. The federal government spent about \$22 million funding a covert Pentagon project that investigated reports of unidentified flying objects. Even though the Department of Defense decided to defund the Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program in 2012, its backers say the program remains in existence. ***Because it's the government, so they are required to deny it exists.

Every state has bad drivers. But which one really has subpar drivers? That honor has been bestowed to California. ***Which is surprising, since traffic moves so stinkin' slow there.

Just to freak the nerds, Will Wheaton attended a screening of the new Star Wars movie, wearing a Star Trek uniform. ***Live long and prosper, Wesley! That's top notch trolling right there.

That reboot of Roseanne has a launch date: Tuesday, March 27 at 8pm on ABC. ***And thank goodness it's finally coming. What television needs more than anything right now is good, wholesome, family values.

Vultures are circling over Jay-Z's streaming music, Tidal. It lost \$44 million before taxes last year and has six months of cash left. ***Sounds like TIDAL is quickly becoming TIDY bowl.

When beautiful women marry not so good-looking men, they're both happier. Why? Men place much value on beauty, while women want a husband who is supportive and positive. But, get this, men who believe they are better looking than their wives tend to be more disgruntled and have more negative feelings about their marriage. That's the word from a study from the University of Tennessee which found while men who married pretty women are content to bask in the glory of their partner's beauty, men who are more attractive than their wives are more likely to offer less emotional and practical support to their partner. ***I married a ten... my wife married a two. That worked out perfectly!

This year during the holiday travel season, airports are expected to see a record 51-million passengers pass through. ***With today's heated climate about sexual harassment, I'd hate to be a TSA worker.

Friday was the last day to sign up for Obama-care. ***If you didn't and you don't have coverage, you get to pay a fine. Lucky you.

The London borough of Greenwich has voted to officially ban Donald Trump from visiting there, should he ever make it to London. ***In response, Trump tweeted that it didn't matter, as he can get McDonald's drive-thru just about anywhere.

NEWS KICKER EVERGREENS...

(Not posted on weekends and U.S. holidays.)

(PERENNIAL) Seven out of ten Americans will resolve to lose weight in the coming new year. ***Meaning seven out of ten Americans won't lose weight in the coming new year.

Two British university professors announced that their study of 80,000 I.Q. tests and 20,000 students shows that on average, men are five I.Q. points smarter than women. ***Which is obviously incorrect, because if men were truly that smart they would NEVER have stated it within earshot of women. (British university professors obviously don't date much.)

"Chill out" isn't just a slang term -- it's also now a scientific suggestion to cure stress. Researchers in Germany say sitting in a freezer can relieve tension. Tests showed that spending three minutes in a freezing room makes stress levels plummet. Scientists say sub-zero temperatures increase the brain's serotonin levels, making their freezing volunteers feel much calmer. ***But they get stressed out all over again when they find out they have contracted pneumonia.

We are now being told that social networking websites are causing alarming changes in the brains of young users. Neuroscientist Susan Greenfield tells us that sites such as Facebook and Twitter are said to shorten attention spans, encourage instant gratification and make young people more self centered. ***In fact, I didn't even pay attention to that story because it took too long to report it.

A Mediterranean diet rich in fruits, vegetables, olive oil and a little wine can cut the risk of heart attacks and strokes by 30 percent, researchers reported in a study that shows the real-life benefits of a diet long encouraged by doctors. The results were so startling that the study was cut short after less than five years, and the results rushed to publication in the New England Journal of Medicine. Many studies have shown that people who eat a Mediterranean diet are less likely to die of heart disease. ***I have a similar diet – rich in fruit-flavored rollups, vegetables and oil (in the form of french fries), and I like to whine.

AS THE JUNGLE TURNS

(Not updated on weekends and U.S. holidays.)

[CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD TUESDAY'S EPISODE](#)

OPEN: And now, FancyMonkey.com, (Show Name), and (Station Call Letters) bring you As the Jungle Turns! We found out last time that the sloth was one of the best animals in the jungle when it came to living in peace. But she wasn't always so peaceful. In fact she was downright worrisome. So much so, in fact, that her worrying and rushed lifestyle of trying to get so much done spread throughout the entire jungle!

CLOSE: Is getting up an extra hour each day really the answer to all of the animals time and work problems? Tune in again next time for another exciting episode of As the Jungle Turns!

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MOMENT OF DUH

Job hunting becomes a colossal Moment of Duh for one man!

Juan Rivera left his home in Juarez, Mexico, last week. He slipped into El Paso, Texas, and went to Riverside, California, to look for a temporary job. When he couldn't find work, he asked someone which train headed back to El Paso. But the train went to the wrong city. So he got on another train, then another. Somehow he ended up in Mankato, Minnesota, in the middle of the night. Wearing only jeans and three shirts, Rivera walked to a convenience store and crawled into a trash bin to stay warm. But at about 5:30am Monday, a garbage truck dumped the contents of the trash bin, including Rivera, into the truck. When the truck got to its next stop, Rivera crawled out the back and the driver called 911. He was treated at a local hospital for minor injuries. Although he entered the country illegally, the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement had no interest in him. Having broken no local laws, and considering his harrowing experience, Rivera was free to go. He spent the night at a Salvation Army before being put on a bus for home.

TOP TEN

TOP HOLIDAY MOVIES

Back when Blockbuster was still a thing, they conducted a survey and found that 61% of families watch a particular holiday movie every year as a key part of their holiday celebrations. Here are the top 10:

- "The Santa Clause 2"

- "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation"
- "A Christmas Story"
- "It's A Wonderful Life"
- "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer"
- "Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas (The 1966 cartoon version)"
- "White Christmas"
- "A Charlie Brown Christmas"
- "Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas (The 2000 live-action version)"
- And at the top of the list... "The Santa Clause"

THE FILES OF LAW & DISORDER

A Christmas story - in the files of Law & Disorder!

FILE #1: James Craig Wilson planned to spend the afternoon decorating for the holidays. Instead, upset by mishaps with his outdoor Christmas lights, he grabbed his .45-caliber pistol and began firing into the ground behind his suburban home. He ended up in the Clark County Jail for investigation of reckless endangerment. Wilson told sheriff's deputies he started getting angry when he found the lights were tangled. His wife had balled them up and tossed them in the garage after last Christmas, he said. As he tried to unroll the string of lights in his driveway, his daughter returned home and drove over the lights. Wilson told his wife not to be alarmed while he shot off some rounds in the back yard to let off steam. He sent his daughter across the street to tell a reserve deputy who lives there that no one had been hurt. Soon after, five deputies arrived and arrested him. "I thought discharging my gun would help me discharge my anger," Wilson said. "I guess I'm going to lose my concealed weapons permit."

FILE #2: There was caroling in the court in Nashville, Tennessee! A traffic court judge was in the holiday spirit and decided to let some drivers off without a fine if they'd sing "Jingle Bells." Judge Mark Fishburn says his singing alternative was a spur-of-the-moment thing and notes that dropping traffic charges is common this time of year.

FILE #3: Police arrested 43 year old Ray Nugent on attempted murder charges, and bank robbery, only to realize that it wasn't him at all. After having him spend 13 days in the slammer, police realized that they had mistaken him for his fugitive twin brother. Ray has filed a \$13 million dollar lawsuit against the County. And says his little brother won't be getting a Christmas present this year!

STRANGE LAW: In Britain, it is illegal to consume a mince pie on Christmas Day.

THIS IS YOUR BRAIN ON DRUGS

"This Is Your Brain On Drugs" is about people doing dumb things under the influence, but addiction is no laughing matter. If you or someone you know needs help, there's a toll free number you can call 1-800-438-0380. That's the Addiction Hope and Help Line at 1-800-438-0380.

A man steals a refrigerator in order to get the urine samples!

Authorities say a man was arrested for stealing a small refrigerator from a probation office used to store urine samples, including his own. The Alachua County Sheriff's Office said a 26-year-old man stole the fridge after testing positive for drug use. Police said he went to the office Sunday, shot out a window to get inside and removed the locked refrigerator. Probation officers gave investigators a list of names of those whose drug samples were stored in the stolen fridge. Investigators tracked down the suspect at his home where they found shards of glass with blood on them. The fridge is still missing, but the man was being held at the Alachua County jail. He's charged with arson, destroying evidence, burglary and larceny.

PHONER PHUN

How about these jewelry store commercials that try to make you think if you don't get her a piece of their overpriced glitter for Christmas you're a loser and she'll never love you? Drives me crazy. Ladies, is jewelry really the number one thing that you want for the holidays? And if not, what IS the number one thing you want for Christmas?

BIBLE BRAIN BUSTER!

QUESTION: Who said , "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed;?"

ANSWER: Paul (Corinthians 4)

QUESTION IMPOSSIBLE

QUESTION: Before 1863 this was free in the U.S. After 1863 we had to start paying for it. What is it?

ANSWER: Mailing letters - using the U.S. Postal Service

TRUE OR FALSE

Pay attention! If our next player doesn't answer all ten T/F questions correctly we start all over from question #1! First person to answer question #10 correctly is our winner!

1. Frosty the Snowman had a carrot for his nose. (False – it was a button.)
2. Frosty came to life when a hat was placed on his head. (True – a “magic” top hat.)
3. The original title of the poem, "'Twas The Night Before Christmas?" is actually "A Visit With Saint Nickolas." (True – written by Clement Clark Moore in 1822.)
4. Cutting down fir trees and decorating them began in Sweden. (False – it began in Medieval Germany.)
5. Santa has seven reindeer... eight including Rudolph. (False – it's NINE reindeer including Rudolph. The others are Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner <or> Donder and Blitzen.)
6. Myrrh, one of the gifts presented to the infant Jesus, is a perfume. (True – it's a perfume made from gum resin of trees in Eastern Africa, India and Arabia.)
7. Frankincense, another one of the gifts presented to Jesus at his birth, is a flower. (False – it's another aromatic tree resin used as incense.)
8. Every snowflake is different, but they all have the same number of sides. (True – they all have six sides.)
9. In the story, "The Grinch Who Stole Christmas?", the dog's name was "Ebenezer". (False – it was Max.)
10. The average length of sitting in Santa's lap at Macy's Department Store is 63 seconds. (False – it's only 37 seconds.)

TABLOID MATCH GAME

You have to match the blank in the tabloid headline with the word or phrase that has been removed!

KIM JONG-UN _____ MINNIE MOUSE (MARRIES)

PYONGYANG, North Korea — Mickey Mouse and North Korea's new leader, Kim Jong Un, married on state TV. Kim Jong-un has long been a fan of Disney. When he was a little boy, his father, Kim Jon II, had him watch Disney cartoons for hours every day. Some say this was to distract his son, others say it was a way to keep his son entertained.

Kim Jong-un fell in love with Minnie Mouse at age 12 and finally his dream has come true. On Saturday, the new leader of North Korea married Minnie Mouse on State TV.

The state-run Korean Central News Agency said Kim was “happier than anyone had ever seen any leader of North Korea in over fifty years.”

Nobody dare tell Kim Jong-un that there was a woman in the Minnie Mouse costume. “To do so would mean death,” said an unnamed source in North Korea.

THE WAY TOO EARLY IN THE MORNING TO UNDERSTAND THE PUNCHLINE EVEN AFTER TWO CUPS OF COFFEE JOKE OF THE DAY

JOKE #1

A woman went to the Post Office to buy stamps for her Christmas cards. "What denomination?" asked the clerk. "Oh, good heavens! Have we come to this?" said the woman. "Fine . . . give me 50 Catholic ones and 50 Baptist ones."

JOKE #2

When the driver of a huge trailer lost control of his rig, he plowed into an empty tollbooth and smashed it to pieces. He climbed down from his truck to survey the wreckage and within a matter of minutes, a truck pulled up and discharged a crew of state department of transportation workers.

The men picked up each broken piece of the former tollbooth and spread some kind of creamy substance on it. Then they began fitting the pieces together.

In less than a half hour, they had the entire tollbooth reconstructed and looking good as new.

"Astonishing!" the truck driver said to the crew chief.

"What was the white stuff you used to get all the pieces together?"

The crew chief said, "Oh, that was tollgate booth paste."

JOKE #3

One day, a man walks into a dentist's office and asks how much it will cost to extract wisdom teeth. "Eighty dollars," the dentist says.

"That's a ridiculous amount," the man says. "Isn't there a cheaper way?"

"Well," the dentist says, "if you don't use an anesthetic, I can knock it down to \$60."

"That's still too expensive," the man says.

"Okay," says the dentist. "If I save on anesthesia and simply rip the teeth out with a pair of pliers, I could get away with charging \$20."

"Nope," moans the man, "it's still too much."

"Hmm," says the dentist, scratching his head. "If I let one of my students do it for the experience, I suppose I could charge you just \$10."

"Marvelous," says the man, "book my wife for next Tuesday!"

USELESS FACTS

A worker digging in Peru recently found a fossilized glyptodon, a prehistoric armadillo the size of a small car.

***Experts believe it was run over by a prehistoric Humvee.

Virginia's tourism agency is ditching some hand gestures that appear in some of its ad campaigns. The images are of people making heart symbols with their hands. Virginia's official tourism slogan is "Virginia is for Lovers." But it turns out the gesture is also used by a violent street gang in Chicago. ***So you are either telling someone you love them, or you're saying, "I'm gonna put a cap in you, Sucka!"

FEATURED FUNNIES

WORRIED ABOUT SANTA CLAUS

Dear Santa,

We're worried about you. From your rosy red cheeks to your legendary girth to your all-night sleigh ride around the world, you may be at risk for diseases, maladies, mishaps and lawsuits that send chills through our Santa-loving hearts. The latest warning comes from the National Rosacea Society in Barrington, Illinois. Dermatologist Dr. Jerome Litt says you have "a clear-cut case of rosacea," a skin condition that also affects millions of Americans, particularly at middle age. Unable to examine you personally, the good doctor based his finding on a well-circulated report that your "cheeks were like roses, (your) nose like a cherry." And rosacea can be aggravated by holiday stress, hot chocolate and overexertion...all things you may encounter this time of year. The one bright note in Dr. Litt's message is that certain antibiotics can help, and he advises you to see a North Pole dermatologist. But the news about your facial tint is only our latest source of concern. A careful examination of what we know about you and your lifestyle raises a host of other trouble signs –

- **OBESITY:** Frankly, Santa, this may be your biggest area of concern. Studies show overweight men have more than double the normal risk of heart attacks and increased chances of many other diseases. We've seen the pictures; we've noticed you in the malls. And we've heard that your tummy shakes "like a bowl full of jelly" when you chuckle. On this, we'll take part of the blame. All these years, we've set out milk and cookies on Christmas Eve. With 102 million homes in the U.S. alone, even if 1 in 100 homes put out two cookies and a cup of milk, that would make an overnight snack of 2,000,000 cookies and 63,750 gallons of milk. Maybe it's time for Mrs. Claus to get you a BoFlex. But be sure to consult a physician before beginning any exercise regimen.
- **PIPE SMOKING:** You've been pictured with a pipe, and even though an apologist in The New York Times once claimed it's only a prop, a witness who encountered you in his home said "the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath." According to the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, pipe and cigar smokers have twice a nonsmoker's risk for lung cancer, four times the risk for larynx cancer and two to three times the risk for cancers of the mouth and esophagus. Even if the pipe's just a prop, it might be a good idea to lose it. Remember, you're not just a saint, you're a role model.
- **STRESS:** Dealing with Christmas wishes from millions of kiddies could certainly put one on the emotional hot seat. And anxiety can surpass even smoking as a risk for certain heart problems. On this point, though, we

have some good news A medical news service says laughter--as evidenced by your trademark "Ho, ho, ho"--is one of the best stress-busters going.

- **SOOT:** We admire your ability to slip up and down the average chimney, an opening about 12 inches by 16 inches. But creosote flakes on the chimney walls are toxic and can lead to respiratory problems. Brent Rigby of Emerald City Chimney Sweeps in Kirkland, WA, said his people never actually go into a chimney, and wear protective masks when they reach up through the fireplace to vacuum the soot.
- **RSI (REPETITIVE STRAIN INJURY):** Cards and letters by the bagful arrive on your doorstep through regular mail, but this year we've noticed you're also receiving, and answering, e-mail through numerous Internet addresses. We applaud that you've moved forward onto the information superhighway, but we caution you: Too much keyboard work can result in painful injuries to the hands, wrists and arms.
- **DEER MITES:** Close, continuous contact with your trusty reindeer means if they get mites, so might you, says Dr. David DuClos, a veterinary dermatologist in Lynnwood, WA. Watch out for itchy rashes, and keep the deer out of your bed.
- **FROSTBITE, HYPOTHERMIA:** You usually bundle up, and that's good. A Weather Service satellite recently showed the temperature at the North Pole was 13 below zero, and high winds are common. Exposure to such conditions can cause frostbite in minutes.
- **MALL THUGS:** You spend a lot of time in shopping malls, so you already know things are getting a little tough out there. Try not to walk back to your sleigh at night alone.
- **MEMORY TROUBLE:** It's been said that you make a list, then check it twice. Are you just being careful, or are you developing a little memory problem?
- **SAD (SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER):** This time of year, there is virtually no daylight at the North Pole, and a lack of sunlight can trigger depression in some people. Maybe a full-spectrum light would help keep you jolly.
- **VIRAL INFECTIONS:** A young witness saw you kissing Mommy underneath the mistletoe last night. You know this is cold and flu season, don't you?
- **JET LAG:** Fatigue, dizziness and insomnia are all dangers that travelers face when they cross through several time zones. And few travelers cross all 24 of them in one night, like you do.
- **SLEIGH ACCIDENTS:** We've seen plenty of pictures of you in that sleigh, but never with a seat belt, and we'd sure hate to see you get hurt. By the way, when you cruise through metropolitan areas, be sure to cover the load. You wouldn't want to have an accident that would boost your insurance rates would you? Which reminds us: You DO have insurance, don't you?

IT MUST BE TRUE BECAUSE I HEARD IT ON THE RADIO!

WE MYTH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS

I don't want to frighten you, but you may have been giving your children some misinformation when telling them the Christmas story!

You may not know it, but there are a lot of myths surrounding Christmas... and some of those myths are within the story of Jesus' birth! In fact, you may have been telling your own children some falsehoods! Let's take a look at some commonly held but inaccurate beliefs about the Christmas story.

- Myth No.1: "There were three wise men." In fact, the Bible does not give any number of wise men at all.
- Myth No.2: "Christ was born on December 25." It is generally agreed that shepherds would not be watching their flocks by night on December 25 because of the frosts at that time of year. December 25 has been celebrated as the date of Christ's birth only since the 4th century, when Christians used this to supplant a Roman festival. His date of birth is actually unknown.
- Myth No.3: "The wise men visited Christ in the stable." Despite all those nativity scenes you see with the wise men in a manger with Jesus, the Bible says they visited Him in a "house" (Matthew 2:11). The family had obviously long left the stable in Bethlehem. This is reinforced by Herod's attempt to kill Jesus by decreeing that all babies in the area who were "two years old and under" were to be killed. There would be no need to include 2-year-olds if Jesus was a new-born.

Now, go forth and continue telling the Christmas story armed now with the truth!

INSPIRATIONAL INSPIRATION

AN ANGEL IN THE DESERT

Sharon and I were finally ready to start on our first vacation/honeymoon. Sharon had never had a vacation in her life, she usually just visited relatives. She and I were looking forward to our first trip together though we were tight on money. Our goal was to head west from Oklahoma City to see northern New Mexico, the Grand Canyon, to Silverton and Durango in Colorado, to Leadville, up to Yellowstone National Park, then meander home.

The plans were nice on paper, but reality hit us in Amarillo when her 1986 Cougar started chugging and we barely made it to the gas station. I thought perhaps she had some bad gas and as the tank was fairly empty, I felt confident a full tank would cure the ill. So off we went again. However, just outside of Tucumcari, New Mexico, the car would barely do 20 mph. The car had a serious problem. We would have to change our vacation plans in all likelihood. The only repair shop open on Saturday gave us grim news. The catalytic converter was bad and it needed to be replaced. The cost was about 250 (1988) dollars. Also, to add injury to insult, we would have to wait until Monday for the part.

I told the man about my wife, who had terminal cancer, about this being our honeymoon, but to fix it and we would adjust our venue. He looked at me in the eye and said, "If you buy me breakfast and get an oil change, this car will be ready in an hour."

I fed him breakfast and paid him 19.95 for an oil change. What he had done was illegal, he removed the converter and then told us the car would run much better and we could use either leaded or unleaded gas.

This man saved our vacation and ensured we had many memories of our trip. I thank this angel in the desert.

B.J. Cassady, Guthrie, Okla

DRIVE TIME DEVOTIONAL

Everybody has a good excuse for not attending church. If you take those excuses and apply them to other things we do (or don't do), like eating, they might look like this list: I don't eat any more because:

1. I was forced to eat as a child.
2. People who eat all the time are hypocrites; they aren't really hungry.
3. There are so many different kinds of food, I can't decide what to eat.
4. I used to eat, but I got bored and stopped.
5. I only eat on special occasions, like Christmas and Easter.
6. None of my friends will eat with me.
7. I'll start eating when I get older.
8. I don't really have time to eat.
9. I don't believe that eating does anybody any good. It's just a crutch.
10. Restaurants and grocery stores are only after your money.

Giving a lame excuse for not attending church or for not getting involved in ministry is just as silly as giving up eating. Church attendance for the Christian is as important as regular, balanced meals. Without spiritual food, we will die. (1 Peter 2:2).

LEFTOVERS

SANTA TREATS

No wonder Santa is fat – do you have any ideas how many calories the guy consumes every Christmas Eve?

According to The American Dietetic Association (ADA), if Santa drinks a glass of whole milk and eats two butter cookies at every American household he visits, he will consume a shocking 14 billion calories and 6.1 billion grams of fat in one night alone!

- o Try skim milk instead of whole, saving 64 calories and eight grams of fat for each glass he drinks.
- o Offer Santa "skinny nog" -- a mixture of skim milk and low fat egg nog or use dry egg nog mix with skim milk to save 145 calories and 18 grams of fat per serving.
- o Leave Santa gingersnaps or graham crackers in place of higher fat cookies conserving 169 calories and eight grams of fat per serving.
- o Opt to give non-food gifts, like food and nutrition books, subscriptions to health newsletters, exercise tapes or equipment and gift certificates.
- o And, according to Zanecosky, carrots, celery, apples and pears are great treats for Santa as well as his reindeer. "With a little planning, it will be easy to expand Santa's food choices without expanding his waistline."

LIFE... LIVE IT

CHRISTMAS CARDS

The type of Christmas card you buy reveals your true personality according to Dr. Ellnor Kinarthy. The expert tells what each type of card says about you:

- **Family photos:** You're a busy person who likes new and different experiences, like living in different places, eating at new restaurants and tasting different foods. But Christmas gives you time to pause and reflect on how much family and friends mean to you.

- **Humorous:** You're a fun-loving optimist who can see the humor in even bad situations, but you're also very sensitive to other people. You're a good listener who gives friends a shoulder to cry on. In addition, you love animals and are inclined to have pets.
- **Santa cards:** You're a people-oriented person who likes going to big parties and enjoys making new friends. You consider all those tasty Christmas foods the best part of the season, and like Santa, you have a tendency to put on a little weight.
- **Christmas trees:** You take pride in your personal appearance and your home. You have an artistic nature and are very creative. Your strong sense of beauty shows through in your home, which probably looks like it was professionally decorated.
- **Current themes (like Santa compiling his list on a computer):** You are very future-oriented and want to be ready for what tomorrow brings. You like video games, new car shows and all the latest gadgets. You may also be well-informed about investments.
- **Religious scenes:** You spend lots of time deep in thought and you value the true meaning of Christmas. You like to help others and often donate time and money to charity. You value the traditional family in which the wife stays home while the husband goes off to work.
- **Winter scenes:** You're very competitive and throw yourself into everything, even your hobbies. But you enjoy pictures of winter because they remind you that it's also important to relax and enjoy the tranquility of the season.

JUST FOR FUN

DIARY OF A SNOW SHOVELER

- December 8 at 6:00 P.M. It started to snow. The first snow of the season and the wife and I sat for hours watching the huge soft flakes drift down from heaven. It looked like a Grandma Moses print. So romantic we felt like newlyweds again. I love snow.
- December 9: We woke to a beautiful blanket of crystal white snow covering every inch of the landscape. What a fantastic sight! Can there be a lovelier place in the whole world? Moving here was the best idea I've ever had. Shoveled for the first time in years and felt like a boy again. I did both our driveway and the sidewalks. This afternoon the snowplow came along and covered up the sidewalks and closed the driveway, so I got to shovel again. What a perfect time.
- December 12: The sun has melted all our lovely snow. What a disappointment. My neighbor tells me not to worry and that we'll definitely have a white Christmas. No snow on Christmas would be awful. Bob says we'll have so much snow by the end of winter that we'll never want to see snow again. I don't think that's possible. Bob is such a nice man. I'm glad he's our neighbor.
- December 14: Snow, lovely snow! Got 8 inches last night. The temperature dropped to minus 20F. The cold makes everything sparkle so. The wind took my breath away, but I warmed up by shoveling the driveway and sidewalks. This is the life! The snowplow came back this afternoon and buried everything again. I didn't realize I would have to do quite this much shoveling, but I'll certainly get back in shape this way. I wish I wouldn't huff and puff so.
- December 15: Twenty inches more are forecast. Sold my van and bought a 4x4 Blazer. Bought snow tires for the wife's car and two extra shovels. Stocked up on milk and bread and extra food for the freezer. The wife wants a wood stove in case the electricity goes out. I think that's silly. We aren't in Alaska after all.
- December 16: We were hit with an ice storm this morning. I fell on my rear on the ice in the driveway putting down salt. Man that hurt. The wife laughed for an hour and I thought this was very cruel.
- December 17: Temperature still way below freezing. Roads are too icy to go anywhere. Power was off for 5 hours. I had to pile on the blankets to stay warm. I had nothing to do but stare at the wife and try not to irritate her. Guess I should have bought a wood stove, but I won't admit it to her. I hate it when she's right. I can't believe I'm freezing to death in my own living room.
- December 20: The power came back on., but we had another 14 inches of that stupid snow last night. More shoveling. Took all day. Doggone snowplow came by twice. Called the only hardware store around to see about buying a snow blower but, they're out. Might have another shipment in sometime in March. I think they're lying. Bob says I have to shovel or the city will have it done and bill me. I think he's lying.
- December 22: Bob was right about a white Christmas because 13 more inches of the white stuff fell today and it's so cold it probably won't melt until August. Took me 45 minutes to get all dressed up to go out and shovel and then I had to go to the bathroom. By the time I got undressed, went to the bathroom and dressed again, I was too tired to shovel. Tried to hire Bob who has a plow on his truck for the rest of the winter; but he says he's too busy. I think the jerk is lying.
- December 23: Only 2" of snow today. And it did warm up to 0. The wife wanted me to decorate the front of the house this morning. What is she? Nuts??? Why didn't she tell me to do that a month ago? She said she did but, I think she's lying.

- December 24: Another 6" snow. Packed so hard by the snowplow I broke the shovel. Thought I was having a heart attack. If I ever catch that jerk who drives that snowplow, I'll drag him through this snow by his frozen nose. I know he hides around the corner and waits for me to finish shoveling and then he comes down the street at 100 miles an hour and throws snow all over where I've just been! Tonight the wife wanted me to sing Christmas carols with her and open presents, but I was busy watching for that evil snowplow.
- December 25: Guess what? Twenty more inches of that white... YOU KNOW WHAT tonight. Snowed in! The idea of shoveling makes my blood boil. I hate snow! Then the snowplow driver came by asking for a donation and I hit him over the head with my shovel. The wife says I have a bad attitude. I think she's insane. If I have to watch "It's A Wonderful Life" one more time, I'm going to kill her.
- December 26: Still snowed in. Why the devil did I ever move here? It was all HER idea. She's really getting on my nerves.
- December 27: Temperature dropped to 30-below and the pipes froze.
- December 28: Warmed up to a high of 15-below. Still snowed in. It's driving me crazy.
- December 29: Ten more inches. Bob says I have to shovel the roof or it could cave in. That's the silliest thing I ever heard. How dumb does he think I am?
- December 30: Roof caved in. The snowplow driver is suing me for a million dollars for the bump on his head. The wife went home to her mother. Nine inches predicted.
- December 31: Set fire to what's left of the house. No more shoveling.
- January 8: I feel so good. I just love those little white pills they keep giving me. Why am I tied to the bed?

FUN LIST

TOYS REMOVED FROM STORE SHELVES THIS YEAR

- Upper GI Joe
- Jack In The Box 360
- The Laugh And Learn Nitrous Tank
- Overstock Dot Com's Empty Milk Crates
- Barrel Full Of Dead Monkeys
- Playschool's Poisonous Dart Shooter
- Thomas The Exploding Tank Engine
- Un-sanded Wooden Blocks With Splinters Hanging Out
- Little Tikes' Totally Tubular Technological Tongue Twister Tooth Training Taffy-Time Talker
- I Don't Care Bears
- Lettuce Patch Kids
- Winnie The Pooh-Pooh
- The Playdoh "Tastes Like Candy" play set
- The "My First Worm Farm" pet kit
- Skinby, the prematurely-balding Furby
- G.I. Joe with Wet, Hacking Cough
- Do-It-Yourself Jigsaw Puzzle (jigsaw included)
- The Moldable-Face Michael Jackson Doll
- Torro's Lil' Tyke Tiller with real blades
- Tummy Tuck, Child's Interactive Playset
- Baby's First Crossbow
- Pete The Speech Impediment Parrot
- The Exact-O Juggling Razor Blade Set
- Lick The Light Socket Home Perm Kit
- Mattel's Box Of Broken Glass
- Box O' Badgers
- Sparky The Paper-Clip Eatin' Electrical Outlet
- Lil' Traffic Dodger Kiddie Scooter
- Junior Jumper Cables
- I Can Do It Myself! Jr. Credit Card Counterfeiting Kit
- Wacky Acid
- Ooooh I Bet That Hurts! The Pain Tolerance Game
- Mr. Stumpy The Junior Chainsaw
- Mr. Stick's Assault On The Bees Nest Game!
- Squash-O The Faulty Car Jack
- Baby's Backseat Megaphone

- Ronco's Really Sharp Eyestick
- Etch-a-Scratch
- Little Arson Annie
- Whammo's Pit Bull Teasing stick
- Hasbro's Slippery Steps
- Black & Decker Silly Driller
- Roof Hanger Paratrooper Outfit
- Remco's Pocket Hive
- Traffic Tag
- Will It Burn? From Parker Brothers
- Chimney Explorer
- My First Ferret Farm
- Ooh - You're Blue! - the Hold-Your-Breath Game
- Shreddy The Garbage Disposer
- Hooked On Litigation
- Baby Boom The Lil' Tykes TNT Game
- Lil' Sharpshooter 'Eye-Dotter' BB Gun!
- My Very Own Atom Smasher

MORE SHOW PREP STUFF...

YOU GOTTA LOVE IT!

(From 2001 – one of my favorite stories of all time.) You may have heard that the State of Missouri didn't want to allow the KKK to "adopt" part of a highway (a section of Interstate 55). Unfortunately, the Klan took the case to the Supreme Court and won their right to do so. So free speech wins... even though it's the KKK that is victorious. Or are they? Missouri retaliated in a very ingenious move. They still honored the U.S. Supreme court's decision to allow the KKK to "adopt" the highway and post their sign attesting to their adoption, but... get this... Missouri renamed that particular section of the highway, "Rosa Parks Highway". Now the KKK has essentially agreed to be responsible for a highway named after a well-known civil rights activist. (I'll give you a moment to regain your composure here...) So what does the KKK have to say about all of this? Ironically, they say it's a "hate crime and it's wrong"! Takes one to know one.

OTHER STUFF I WANT TO CRAM INTO TODAY'S PREP

(Not posted on weekends and U.S. holidays.)

How much would you pay to avoid all the stress associated with the holidays? According to a new survey by Yelp, here are 10 things that stress us out this time of year, and how much we'd pay to have someone else deal with them:

1. To have someone put up all our decorations, inside and outside. (\$143)
2. To have them all taken down. (\$128)
3. To have all your holiday shopping done for you. (\$121)
4. To have all your gifts perfectly wrapped for everyone. (\$96)
5. To guarantee your significant other will love their present? (\$134 on top of what we're planning to spend on the actual gift)
6. To have your entire holiday meal taken care of. (\$146. That includes buying the food, cooking everything, and doing the dishes)
7. To make sure the turkey was perfect. (an extra \$108)
8. To guarantee no one at dinner argued about politics. (\$152)
9. To completely avoid your in-laws this year. (\$158)
10. And the thing we'd pay the most for is to find our Christmas spirit again, and really enjoy the holidays like when we were kids. (\$259)

If you add it all up, that's \$1,445 worth of holiday stress.

A Florida gas station turned into a makeshift delivery room this weekend when an obstetrician filling up his vehicle was flagged down by a frantic man to help a woman in labor. Soto, who was dressed in his blue hospital scrubs as he was en route to deliver a patient's baby about 15 minutes away, made a quick stop at the gas station. That's when he was flagged down by a frantic man to help a woman in labor. In another twist, the woman was actually a former patient of Soto's — she had visited for a checkup before switching clinics due to an insurance issue. Soto delivered a healthy baby and then continued on to the hospital for the next delivery.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/good-news/surprise-arrival-florida-doctor-getting-gas-delivers-baby-at-station/ar-BBGvwOU>

Pinterest is a goldmine when it comes to sourcing inspiration and ideas, especially at Christmas. Now Pinterest has released their stats on the top trending Christmas decor ideas people are searching for and saving. Check out their results on everything from table settings to garland, gift wrapping to glitter dipped balloons.
<http://www.womansworld.com/posts/the-most-popular-christmas-decor-trends-on-pinterest-149227>

An Alabama couple is going to need several more stockings to hang on the mantle this Christmas. According to Today.com, In a matter of minutes, Courtney and Eric Waldrop became the parents of nine kids on Monday after giving birth to sextuplets, three boys and three girls – adding to their three older sons. The babies were born at just under 30 weeks and weigh less than 3 pounds each. It took a team of nearly 40 medical specialists to deliver the newborns via C-section at Huntsville Hospital for Women and Children.
<http://on.today.com/2AYuYEh>

While you've warned your kids about prescription drugs, it's still a smart idea to prevent them or their friends from raiding pills when you're not looking. You might also want to keep those snooping friends and family from checking out specific cabinets and drawers when visiting. Those places might be made of wood, but you can make them secure. The two-piece [StealthLock](#) is controlled by a small wireless keypad, and its receiver latch mounts easily. Punch a code to open, take your meds, push the door closed and punch in the code to lock. While 80 pounds of resistance won't stop someone with a pry bar, it will keep your kids' friends honest. Read more about it at <http://amzn.to/2jaOPo5>.

A new study says more and more people are calling Uber rather than an ambulance to get to the hospital. Economics professor David Slusky and Dr. Leon Moskatel looked at ambulance usage in 766 US cities upon the arrival of Uber from 2013 to 2015. Slusky notes that when Uber came to a city, ambulance usage dropped "at least" 7% using the "most conservative" numbers. Moskatel says they expect it to increase to 10% or 15% "as Uber continues to expand as an alternative for people." Ironically, Uber is not necessarily thrilled about this development and spokesperson Andrew Hasbun said, "Uber is not a substitute for law enforcement or medical professionals. In the event of any medical emergency, we always encourage people to call 911." But the researchers say Uber subbing for ambulances isn't always a bad thing. For people who aren't having a medical emergency, Uber is a far more cost-effective option than an ambulance. (Mercury News)

If you were Santa, "What refueling snack do you want set out?" That's what a Men's Health Twitter poll asked, and the top wasn't cookies and milk as you might think. The 2,455 people who responded said:

- Wings and Beer (53 percent)
- Cookies and Milk (26 percent)
- Energy bar and smoothie (12 percent)
- Jerky and Red Bull (9 percent)

SOUL-GLO

(Feel-good stories! Only posted as new stories come available. Not posted on weekends and U.S. holidays.)

A nativity pageant went hilariously wrong when one of the sheep steals baby Jesus. Little Teegan Benson, 2, could not wait to get up on stage to play the role of "sheep" in the First Baptist Church of White Pine's Nativity scene this weekend in Tennessee. <http://on.today.com/2z8Pwah>

TOTALLY OUTRAGEOUS!

(Only posted as stories come available. Not posted on weekends and U.S. holidays.)

In Chicago, a 48-year-old police sergeant was arrested for allegedly trying to kill his son-over missing vodka! Raymond Leuser is being held without bond as prosecutors laid out the alleged motive for Tuesday's shooting at Leuser's home on Chicago's Southwest Side. Leuser is a sergeant with the Indian Head Park Police Department and once served as interim chief. Now, he is charged with attempting to murder his 22-year-son. Prosecutors say Leuser called in sick on Monday, stopped by a convenience store and bought vodka, pizza and popcorn. Around 2:30 a.m. Tuesday, the son drank three cups of the vodka and replaced it with water. At some point, Leuser discovered the switch so when his son walked into the kitchen, the elder Leuser shot him in the stomach, thigh and shoulders. The defense is claiming self-defense, saying Leuser had a black eye but prosecutors said there were no signs of a struggle in the house. (CBS2)

AND I LEAVE YOU WITH THIS THOUGHT

When I'm feeling down, I like to whistle. It makes the neighbor's dog run to the end of his chain and gag himself.

THE TICKET Movie Reviews with MARIE ASNER

Marie Asner has been reviewing films for over 35 years. Her outlets include radio, print and Internet. For more in-depth movie reviews of the following films, visit www.Tollbooth.org. Ratings from 1 (Low) to 5 (High).

DECEMBER 15, 2017...

Star Wars: The Last Jedi--- This holiday season at the movie box-office has special treats for fans, from “The Shape Of Water” to the animated “Ferdinand” to the new version of “Jumanji.” The biggest treat may be the new “Star Wars” film about The Last Jedi. It begins right at the end of the first “Star Wars” (2015) where Rey (Daisy Ridley) finds Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill) and that was that. Now, we see what will happen, and the familiar characters are there from R2D2 to C P30 to Princess Leia (the late Carrie Fisher) and how that is handled. Also, Chewbacca has a new actor, Joonas Suotamo has replaced Peter Mayhew. Onboard is also John Boyega as Finn and Adam Driver, all dressed in black. Planning ahead to the holiday season of 2019, will come Episode 9. “Star Wars: The Last Jedi” is rated PG 13 and a rating of 4 and the fans know who they are. May the Force be with them all.

I, Tonya---The world of sports can be knife sharp in competition, down to .001 at times, and one of the most competitive is figure skating. This wasn't always the case, but with years of media coverage, the sport has taken on almost a fashion look as well as an athletic one. Rivalry is intense and none more so that in women's figure skating. “I, Tonya” (played by Margot Robbie) presents Tonya Harding's side of the story in which she allegedly hired someone to injure her rival, Nancy Kerrigan. Talk about front page news. Harding's ex-husband, Jeff Gillooly (played by Sebastian Stan) was the villain, with Harding's mother, LaVona (played by Allison Janney) as a hard-hearted stage mother. Several aspects of that particular situation are presented by director Craig Gillespie. The idea of trying to harm/maim your rival is a harsh one and the press had a field day. “Tonya” is rated R. Rating of 2 for fans.

Ferdinand---This charming animated film is about a Spanish fighting bull, but he doesn't have fight in him. Instead, he likes flowers. Adapted from the story of “Ferdinand,” by Munro Leaf and Robert Lawson, we see what happens when Ferdinand is accidentally taken into a bull ring. What to do? He has friends, though, a horse, dog and hedgehog. Voices are of John Cena as Ferdinand, and Kate McKinnon and Anthony Anderson. “Ferdinand” is rated PG. Rating of 3 for fans.

Gotti---John Gotti was a famous mobster in New York City. He ruled the town and in this film, John Travolta takes on the role of Gotti, with Kelly Preston as his wife and Spencer Lofranco as his son, John Gotti, Jr. Violence follows the life of someone in crime. Also in the cast are Stacy Keach and Leo Rossi. “Gotti” is rated R. No rating.

The Shape Of Water---Sally Hawkins is making a name for herself as an actress this year. Not only did she do a splendid job as Maud Davis in “Maudie,” playing a woman with disabilities who overcomes great difficulty to become an artist, but now in “The Shape Of Water,” she does it again. A mute. This film is a science fiction/fantasy film of wanting to communicate and not being able to do so. Facial expression and body language do the acting instead of vocal expression. This is a Guillermo del Toro film, so expect the unexpected. The storyline is in the mid 1960's, the Cold War, and an experiment that is Top Secret. Hawkins and her friend, Octavia Spencer, are janitors in this special lab, but they do a bit of investigating and find something quite, quite unexpected and what an experiment, it is. Human? “The Shape Of Water” mixes science with compassion and, of course, the government that is just a step behind everyone who is curious. Also in the film are Doug Jones, Michael Shannon as the villain, and Richard Jenkins. Terrific soundtrack. “The Shape Of Water” is rated PG 13. Rating of 3 for science fiction fans.

DECEMBER 20, 2017...

Jumanji: Welcome To The Jungle---The first “Jumanji” came out in 1995, starring Robin Williams, and was a hit with its special effects. This update version of a game board that doesn't want to give up, The updated version has four people who get caught up in a video game and find themselves in another world and in other bodies. The stars are Dwayne Johnson, Kevin Hart, Karen Gillan and Jack Black. The names of some of the characters they portray are colorful including Dr. Smolder Bravestone and Ruby Roundhouse. Set in Hawaii, there are jungle animals. Slapstick humor, too, whereas the first film, was kid-minded, this one is gadget minded. That all said, “The Rock” has gone from one action movie to another and more planned for the future. Kevin Hart is a comic who blends in with any actor. Beware, jungle. As far as “The Rock,” what a career for a man who began as a professional wrestler. We will see how this new version of the board game works. “Jumanji: Welcome To The Jungle” is rated PG 13. Rating of 2 for fans.

DECEMBER 22-25, 2017...

Bright---How about living in a fantasy world where humans and fantasy creatures have co-existed for eons. This is an alternate Earth, and policeman Will Smith and his Orc partner, Joel Edgerton, are on duty. However, there is evil afoot

and they have to find a magic wand before anyone else. Also in the cast are Noomi Rapace and Lucy Fry. "Bright" is rated PG 13. No rating.

Downsizing---Bet you thought this term mean problems in the work force. Think again. In this film, it concerns shrinking people (shades of "The Incredible Shrinking Man.") There is a purpose in this movie, though, and that is if you want to control populations and have the environment last, make the people smaller. Hmm, does that mean family pets, too? One swipe of that paw and....! To begin the experiment, a group of people are purposely shrunk to four inches and live together, but then problems come forth. Stars are Matt Damon, Christoph Waltz, Udo Kier and Kristen Wiig. "Downsizing" is rated PG 13. Rating of 2 for fans.

Happy End---This is a depressing film about a family with poisoning and suicides in their past. The story centers on a teenage girl named Eve (Fantine Hardoin) with a troubled past and uncertain future. She eventually lives with her aunt (Isabelle Huppert) and still has problems. Others in the cast are Toby Jones and Jean-Louis Trintignant. French language film. "Happy End" is rated R. No rating.

Father Figures (also called "Bastards")---This film stars Owen Wilson and Ed Helms as fraternal twins. Their Mom is Glenn Close and they, as adult, find she doesn't know who their biological father(s) are. What to do? The search is on. Also in the cast are Christopher Walken and J. K. Simmons. "Father Figures" is rated PG 13. No rating.

Hostiles---Christian Bale stars in this western as an army officer in 1892, who agrees to escort a Native American tribal chief and his family back to their family ground. Of course, there are problems along the way with outsiders and weather. The cast includes Wes Studi, Adam Beach and Rosamund Pike. "Hostiles" is rated R. No rating.

Pitch Perfect 3---This is supposed to be the last film in the series, but then everyone says that. The group goes separate ways after winning their championship. Trouble is, they are bored, so along comes a chance to join the USO and entertain troops abroad. But, of course, they get into trouble. The stars include Hailee Steinfeld, Anna Kendrick, Rebel Wilson, Ruby Rose and Elizabeth Banks. "Pitch Perfect 3" is rated PG 13. No rating.

The Greatest Showman---Hugh Jackman is quite the performer, from "Wolverine" to Broadway. Here he takes on the role of P. T. Barnum and how he put together his wonderful circus. There are animals, clowns and trapeze artists, which brings us to singer, Zendaya, who plays Anne Wheeler. She is a trapeze artist who falls for P. T. Barnum's partner, played by Zac Efron. Zandaya did most of her own stunts in this film. Also in the cast are Rebecca Ferguson and Michelle Williams. Music by John Debney and Justin Paul. How to put a show together? The Big Top has it all. "The Greatest Showman" is rated PG. Rating of 2 for fans. For children over age ten.

The Phantom Thread---Daniel Day Lewis submerses himself in his acting roles. From "My Right Foot" to "The Last of the Mohicans" and now a fashion designer in "The Phantom Thread." Lewis has said that this is his final film and then he will retire from acting. However, sometimes a tempting role does come along... A phantom thread is a part of fabric/design in which, if you have the right thread, can unravel the garment. Much like a government, in which one small detail can bring the house down. In this film, set in the 1950's in London, Daniel Day-Lewis is a couture fashion designer to nobility, along with his sister (Lesley Manville) and they have a structured life. Enter the outspoken, Alma (Vicky Krieps) who gives new fashion inspiration to Daniel, but his sister begins to see the facade crack and doesn't know how her brother will handle, perhaps, love? Jonny Greenwood composed the score and the film was written and directed by Paul Thomas Anderson. "The Phantom Thread" is rated PG-13. Rating of 3 for fans of fashion and the stars.

DECEMBER 29, 2017...

Film Stars Don't Die In Liverpool---An odd title for a movie, but then this film isn't about your usual actress. It is about Gloria Grahame, an actress in the 1950's who won a Best Supporting Actress Award for "The Bad and the Beautiful." Other memorable roles were in "Oklahoma," "Sudden Fear" and "It's A Wonderful Life." Annette Bening takes on the role of Gloria Grahame, whose regular life was more colorful than her screen life. She had several husbands and married her step-son, here played by Jamie Bell. Also in the cast are Vanessa Redgrave and Julie Walters. "Film Stars Don't Die In Liverpool" is rated R. Rating of 2 for fans.

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