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**PRINT VERSIONS OF TODAY'S PREP:**

**ODT:**

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## **WELCOME TO THE SHOW!**

If I sound a little weird it's because I haven't had a chance to de-ice my nose.

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

*(None on the weekends.)*

## **BIBLE VERSE OF THE DAY**

When King Herod had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written: 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means the least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.'" --*Matthew 2:4-6*

**Psalm 30:5** = For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.

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](#)

## **HEARTLIGHT DAILY VERSE, PRAYER & THOUGHT**

*(From VerseOfTheDay.com)*

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. — Romans 12:21

Thought: A friend used to remind me that the number one goal in dealing with difficult people or circumstances is this: Don't become what you hate. He wasn't talking about hating the person, but he meant that we don't want to become evil, wicked, petty, and sinful in our actions and motivations. We don't overcome the Devil by underhanded and dishonorable means. We overcome evil, we drive it back into the abyss, by doing what is right and filling our hearts and lives with goodness. There is no greater example of overcoming evil with good than Jesus.

Prayer: Holy God, please bless me with character as I resist those who are critical, cynical, and vengeful toward me. Please help me respond in a way that reflects the character and Lordship 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](mailto:phil@heartlight.org).

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

**Proverbs 12:23 NIV** = A prudent man keeps his knowledge to himself, but the heart of fools blurts out folly.

## **TODAY IS SATURDAY – DECEMBER 23, 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 01 SHOPPING DAYS UNTIL CHRISTMAS.**

Today is **NATIONAL PFEFFERNUESSE DAY**, a day to make those spicy cookies that are a Christmas tradition in Europe. Don't forget to add the Puderzucker. They're just not Pfeffernuesses without the Puderzucker.

Today is **POPCORN POPPING DAY**. \*\*\*Much easier to pronounce than Pfeffernuesses.

**A VISIT FROM ST. NICHOLAS PUBLICATION DAY.** On this day the poem "A Visit from St. Nicholas" was first published by the Troy Sentinel in 1823. This Clement Moore poem is generally known as "The Night Before Christmas." ([audio clip](#))

And, today is **FESTIVUS**. According to Wikipedia, Festivus is a secular non-commercialized holiday celebrated on December 23. It was created by writer Dan O'Keefe in 1966 and introduced into popular culture by his son Daniel, a screenwriter for the TV show "Seinfeld", as part of a comical storyline on the show on December 18, 1997 in the "The Strike". The holiday's celebration, as shown on "Seinfeld", includes an unadorned aluminum "Festivus pole," practices such as the "Airing of Grievances" and "Feats of Strength," and the labeling of easily explainable events as "Festivus miracles". Celebrants of the holiday sometimes refer to it as "Festivus for the rest of us." Since then, the name "Festivus" has also begun to be used as a general term for any type of December party not affiliated with the season's other events. ([audio clip](#))

### **TODAY IS ALSO...**

Festivus  
Human Light Celebration

**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](http://BrownieLocks.com)*)

### **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

### **WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27**

Free Balloon Day (SpongeBob Squarepants)  
Howdy Doody Day  
Visit The Zoo Day

### **THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28**

Holy Innocents Day  
Endangered Species Act Day  
National Chocolate Day  
Pledge of Allegiance Day

### **FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29**

Tick Tock Day  
YMCA Day

### **SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30**

Bacon Day  
Falling Needles Family Fest Day  
No Interruptions Day

### **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31**

First Nights  
Global Champagne Day  
Look On The Bright Side Day

Make Up Your Mind Day  
New Years Eve  
New Year's Eve Banished Words List  
New Year's Dishonor List  
Universal Hour of Peace Day  
World Healing Day  
World Peace Meditation Day

### **MONDAY, JANUARY 01**

Copyright Law Day  
Commitment Day  
Divorce Monday  
Ellis Island Day  
Euro Day  
First Foot Day  
Global Family Day  
Mummer's Parade  
New Years Day  
New Year's Dishonor List Day  
Polar Bear Plunge or Swim Day  
Public Domain Day  
Rose Bowl Game  
Tournament of Roses Parade Day  
World Day of Peace  
Z Day

### **ON THIS DAY**

**1617:** The first American penal colony was established by royal proclamation, providing for the exile of habitual criminals to the colony of Virginia.

**1776:** Thomas Paine wrote, "These are the times that try men's souls." \*\*\*Obviously referring to last-minute Christmas shopping.

**1823:** The Clement Moore poem "A Visit from St. Nicholas" was published in New York by The Troy Sentinel. It began "Twas the night before Christmas...."

**1873:** The Women's Temperance movement began in Hillsboro, Ohio, when ladies led by "Mother" Stewart marched into a saloon and ran off the customers. \*\*\*Which, oddly enough, doesn't seem to indicate much temperance.

**1928:** The National Broadcasting Company set up a permanent, radio coast-to-coast network.

**1942:** Bob Hope agreed to entertain U.S. troops in Alaska to begin a Christmas tradition of taking shows to American forces that continued through six different decades.

**1946:** The University of Tennessee refused to play Duquesne University because the Duquesne basketball team included a black player.

**1951:** The TV western drama "Hopalong Cassidy" last aired on NBC and moved into syndication. It starred William Boyd as Hoppy and Edgar Buchanan as sidekick Red Connors. Boyd had purchased the TV rights to his feature films of the 1940s and made a fortune with the TV series.

**1964:** The Beach Boys appeared for the first time on "Shindig." The group performed "Little Saint Nick," "Dance, Dance, Dance," "Johnny B. Goode," and "Monster Mash."

**1982:** Actor Jack Webb, Dragnet's Sergeant Joe Friday died of a heart attack at age 62. Flags flew at half-mast at police stations throughout Los Angeles.

**1987:** The movie "Good Morning Vietnam" starring Robin Williams opened at theaters throughout the U.S.

**1994:** Singer Wynonna gave birth to Elijah Judd Kelley.

**1995:** A federal bankruptcy judge in Los Angeles ruled that the rights to The Three Stooges belonged to the legal heirs of Larry Fine, Curly DeRita, and Moe Howard. Rights to the Stooges films had been tied up in court for years.

**1998:** Police in Leesburg, Virginia, caught a robber because during one burglary the suspect took a break and called to consult a psychic hot line. And he gave the psychic his real name. The call cost the homeowner \$250, but it help police nab their man.

### **TODAY IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY**

**1569:** Russian czar Ivan IV ("the Terrible") has Philip, bishop of Moscow, killed in his prison cell after the bishop criticized Ivan's policies and mass executions.

**1648:** Robert Barclay, the most prominent theologian in the early Quaker church, is born in Gordonstoun, Scotland. His Apology for the True Christian Religion (1676) is considered the classic exposition of Quaker principles.

**1652:** John Cotton, the most eminent minister in colonial Massachusetts and considered "the father of New England Congregationalism," dies. When he fell ill earlier that year, his followers observed a comet (or "attendant to the stars"), which "continued all that while and until his buryal . . . then disappeared."

**1925:** Edith Warner's remains are laid to rest. She had been a missionary 33 years in Niger and explored areas never before seen by a white person.

### **HOLLYWOOD, SPORTS AND CELEBRITY FIGURE BIRTHDAYS**

- o actress (*Planet of the Apes*) Estella Warren, 39
- o actress ("All My Children") Susan Lucci 68 ([audio clip](#))

### **BEE-BOP BIRTHDAYS**

**(Music Artist Birthdays From SongFacts.com)**

**1689 :** Joseph Bodin de Boismortier

**1926 :** Harold Dorman

**1929 :** Chet Baker

**1935 :** "Little" Esther Phillips

**1939 :** [Johnny Kidd](#)

**1940 :** Eugene Record ([The Chi-Lites](#))

**1940 :** Jorma Kaukonen ([Jefferson Airplane](#))

**1941 :** Tim Hardin

**1943 :** Derek Smalls ([Spinal Tap](#))

**1945 :** Ron Bushy ([Iron Butterfly](#))

**1946 :** Robbie Dupree

**1949 :** Adrian Belew

**1949 :** Ariel Bender ([Mott the Hoople](#))

**1949 :** Luther Grosvenor (Spooky Tooth)

**1951 :** Johnny Contardo (Sha-Na-Na)

**1958 :** Dave Murray ([Iron Maiden](#))

**1959 :** Victoria Williams

**1966 :** [Eddie Vedder](#) ([Pearl Jam](#))

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

#### **Who made chewing gum popular?**

One of the prime candidates is not somebody you would connect to chewing gum. You've probably heard of him, but only if you "remember the Alamo." He was the commander of the Mexican troops who attacked and killed the Texans defending this San Antonio mission in 1836: General Santa Anna. Santa Anna won that battle but his country lost the war and the territory of Texas. The General ruled Mexico for a while and then, in exile, ended up in--of all places-- Staten Island, New York. He brought with him his habit of chewing chicle, the sap of a Mexican tree. An inventor he befriended, Thomas Adams, was inspired by Santa Anna's habit to turn chicle into a commercial product. Adams later added flavor to it and it became modern chewing gum, making one of America's most reviled villains also an unsung hero of its popular culture.

## **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.)*

**(This feature will be taking a break December 25<sup>th</sup> thru January 1<sup>st</sup> and will return Tuesday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>.)**

### **NEWS KICKER EVERGREENS...**

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

**(This feature will be taking a break December 25<sup>th</sup> thru January 1<sup>st</sup> and will return Tuesday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>.)**

(PERENNIAL) What do most letters to Santa ask for? You might be surprised! U.S. Postal Service workers who handle letters addressed to Santa at the North Pole say more letters ask for basics — coats, socks and shoes — rather than Barbie dolls, video games and computers. \*\*\*Question – what's the post office doing reading my personal letter to Santa?

## **AS THE JUNGLE TURNS**

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

**(This feature will be taking a break December 25<sup>th</sup> thru January 1<sup>st</sup> and will return Tuesday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>.)**

**[CLICK HERE](#) TO DOWNLOAD TUESDAY'S EPISODE – JANUARY 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018**

OPEN: And now, FancyMonkey.com, (Show Name), and (Station Call Letters) bring you As the Jungle Turns! Last time, the jungle animals were so busy trying to get so many things done that they didn't have time for anything else... meetings, planning, even talking to each other! They were getting annoyed with each other – and then, all at once, the animals shouted...

CLOSE: Do the turtles have a secret to staying calm, cool, and collected? Will they share the secret with the other animals? Tune in again next time, as FancyMonkey.com, (Show Name), and (Station Call Letters) bring you As the Jungle Turns!

*\*\*\*You may simulcast "As the Jungle Turns" on the Internet stream of your live broadcast only. Any other Internet use of "As the Jungle Turns" in whole or part including podcasting of your live broadcast is a violation of copyright law. Thank you for your cooperation on this vitally important issue. If you have any questions, please [e-mail](#) us and ask about "Jungle Jam & Friends the Radio Show" usage.*

## **MOMENT OF DUH**

**A demolition crew creates a really big Moment of Duh!**

A wrecking crew in Texarkana, Arizona, was recently sent to demolish a condemned home. Apparently these were not very well educated wrecking crew workers, because they couldn't figure out their left from their right. Turns out they demolished the wrong home - on the other side of the street.

## **TOP TEN**

### **TOP TEN GIFTS YOUR HUSBAND DOES NOT WANT FOR CHRISTMAS**

10. Anne of Avonlea/Anne of Green Gables Collectors Edition with 74 minutes of extra footage
9. Any knick-knack
8. Tickets to the ballet
7. Another new tie
6. A Bath and Body Works Soap Basket
5. New teddy bear pajamas
4. Vacuum cleaner
3. A weekend seminar on "Getting in Touch With Your Feelings"
2. Pair of fuzzy bunny slippers
1. A nose and ear hair trimmer (OK, well maybe.)

## **THE FILES OF LAW & DISORDER**

**Adam Vickers and Kyle Wisdom punk'd a friend -- but police aren't laughing.**

FILE #1: According to authorities the pair staged a murder scene, making it look like Wisdom killed Vickers. The target of the practical joke, Daniel Maerz, panicked and called the cops. Police in Central Point, Oregon, rushed to the scene and even ordered the lockdown of a nearby elementary school. Officers say the two jokers had been drinking quite a bit. Both men were busted and now face a number of charges, including conspiracy to commit a crime. Maerz was arrested, too, for possession of speed.

FILE #2: The mayor of a Brazilian town is trying to pass a law making it illegal for residents to die. Mayor Roberto Pereira da Silva came up with the idea because the town's (Biritiba-Mirim) only cemetery is full. He wants to pass a law that would force relatives of people who die in the town face fines or even jail. The law would make it an offense for the town's 28,000 citizens to not look after their health properly. \*\*\*MARLAR: I'm going to take a wild guess and say the mayor moonlights as a Fitness Center owner.

FILE #3: A foiled Jersey City bank robber left one bank after the teller informed him that he wouldn't honor a hold-up note. A half hour later the same guy left another bank empty-handed because, according to the teller at the second bank, there was "no cash."

STRANGE LAW: In Florida, a special law prohibits unmarried women from parachuting on Sunday or she shall risk arrest, fine, and/or jailing.

## **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 wannabe Santa scares children while looking for his reindeer.**

It wasn't exactly the Santa experience dreams are made of. In Eau Claire, Wisconsin, a drunken Santa Claus prompted a mom to call 911 after he stumbled into her yard apparently looking for his reindeer and scaring her kids. Officers ticketed 55-year-old Thomas Arnold for having an open beer in a car. But, the kids say they knew right away this wasn't the Santa they know and love. 9-year-old Katie Dockerty said, "He smelled like alcohol. So I knew it wasn't the real Santa because Santa doesn't drink alcohol!" Katie says the Santa that ended up in her lawn was loud and had really dirty hands and he tried to put his hat on her little sister. Six-year-old Zoe described him in one word: "Drunk."

## **PHONER PHUN**

Do you take advantage of the occasion when you see mistletoe, or do you avoid it at all costs?

What forgotten Christmas tradition should churches revive?

## **BIBLE BRAIN BUSTER!**

**QUESTION: Who was described as being a "wild donkey of a man?"**

**ANSWER: Ishmael, Hagar's son. (Genesis 16:12)**

## **QUESTION IMPOSSIBLE**

**QUESTION: In 2002, when a man tried to rob a lottery ticket shop in Munich, Germany, the shop owner's wife sprayed the thief with what holiday item?**

**ANSWER: Christmas glitter spray. The would-be thief was so stunned he ran out and left his wallet on the counter. Still covered in glitter, he reported the theft of his wallet at a nearby police station. Police immediately arrested him.**

## **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. Eggnog is the modern variation of wassail. (True. Wassail was a popular Christmas drink in Victorian England. It comes from the Old English expression "waes hael," meaning "to your health." It was made of eggs, curdled cream, nuts, spices, roasted apples and mulled ale.)
2. Christmas trees in the home originated because of banned Christmas plays outdoors. (True. The pine tree was used in Europe in the 14th century as part of miracle plays performed in front of cathedrals. They were decorated with apples, symbols of the Garden of Eden. When the church banned the plays, people put trees in their homes and decorated them with wafers representing the Eucharist. The wafers evolved into cookies, fruit and, later, ornaments.)
3. Mistletoe was used to cure mouth sores. (False. Considered by the Romans as a charm against evil, mistletoe is brewed by the French to cure stomachaches.)
4. The Macy's department store was the first to introduce annual Christmas bonuses. (False. Department store owner F.W. Woolworth believed that happy employees worked better under stress. He started the Christmas bonus tradition in 1899 with \$5 to each worker for every year of service -- but not exceeding \$25, which was a lot of money in those days.)
5. Until 1875, employees were expected to report to work on Christmas as if it were any other day. (True... unless Christmas fell on a Sunday.)
6. The first commercial Christmas tree ornaments could open to reveal candies. (True - small toys, candies and other treats were hung on boughs for the kiddies. Too bad we don't do that anymore.)
7. Santa originally had only two reindeer in front of the sleigh. (False. Folklore holds that one reindeer originally pulled Santa's sleigh. In 1823, Clement C. Moore gave him eight in "A Visit From St. Nicholas." A story by Robert L. May in 1939 introduced Rudolph, who was immortalized in Gene Autry's 1949 classic song "Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer.")
8. Using an "X" in place of "Christ" in the word Christmas began during the political correctness movement. (False. The "X" in Xmas stands for the letter Chi, the first letter in the Greek word for Christ. Essentially, writing "Xmas" is the same as writing "Christmas" - and it means exactly the same thing, despite those who would argue the point otherwise.)
9. The wise men actually saw the star twice. (True. Once in the East to set them on their journey, and again to lead them from Jerusalem to Bethlehem.)
10. December 25th was not celebrated as the birthday of Christ until the year AD 440. (True)

### **TABLOID MATCH GAME**

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

#### **FAT COMIC HAS NEW \_\_\_\_\_ PLAN (DIET)**

Monstrously obese, former comedian Louie Anderson has found a new way to lose weight, which landed him in The Desert Springs Hospital in Las Vegas.

Anderson is a regular customer at the infamous Heart Attack Grill, on Fremont Street, where patrons over 350 pounds eat free. Anderson was between meals, and was famished, so he ordered his long-time nurse Abie Geisberg fight traffic on Las Vegas Blvd, so that he could graze on a twenty pound cheeseburger.

After eating three pounds, Anderson's stomach began shaking violently. The ground began to tremble under his chair and restaurant patrons started running out the door in fright. Anderson's stomach began to rip open and fragments of hundreds of pounds of food and waste began to cover the table, the patrons, and walls of the restaurant.

Nurse Geisberg tried to hold Anderson's stomach together, but was covered instead with chunks of unchewed meat, fish bones, cow intestines, and mutton. "I told him not to put extra onions on his burger," Geisberg told WWN, "he must have tried to pass gas and something took a wrong turn in his intestinal tract."

The shaken customers who got part of the food shrapnel were taken to the Trauma Unit of County Hospital where they were treated for minor cuts and lacerations. Trauma counselors are on hand for all survivors.

Anderson underwent five hours of intensive surgery where his entrails were sewn together with tension cables, used in building and supporting bridges. Anderson is thankful that there were no casualties, "next time I eat a twenty pound cheeseburger, I'll make sure I take a dump before I go."

Anderson, who is expected to make a full recovery, can be seen on reruns of The Family Feud on The Game Show Network.

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

### **JOKE #1**

The game show contestant was only 200 points behind the leader and about to answer the final question - worth 500 points!

"To be today's champion," the show's smiling host intoned, "name two of Santa's reindeer."

The contestant, a man in his early thirties, gave a sigh of relief, gratified that he had drawn such an easy question.

"Rudolph!" he said confidently, "and, ...Olive!"

The studio audience started to applaud (like the little sign above their heads said to do,) but the clapping quickly faded into mumbling, and the confused host replied, "Yes, we'll accept Rudolph, but could you please explain... 'Olive?!?'"

"You know," the man circled his hand forward impatiently and began to sing, "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer - had a very shiny nose. And if you ever saw it, you would even say it glowed. \*Olive,\* the other reindeer..."

### **JOKE #2**

A little girl was wearing one of those Medical Alert bracelets. Someone asked her what the bracelet was for.

She replied, "I'm allergic to nuts and eggs."

The person asked, "Are you allergic to cats?"

The girl said, "I don't know. I don't eat cats."

### **JOKE #3**

Sally was puzzled recently by the odd messages she kept getting on her voice mail. Day after day, all she'd hear, from friends, family, and customers alike, would be their message and then they'd ALL say, "BEEP."

She discovered the solution to the BEEP riddle when she dialed her own phone number.

Her message said, "I'm not available right now, so please leave a beep after the message."

## **USELESS FACTS**

An Italian judge ordered a 220-pound teenage thug to lose weight on the theory that his low self-esteem made him a bully. \*\*\*Even if it doesn't work, at least he won't have a need to steal other kids' lunch money.

Looking for a safe place to drive to? If you're planning to relocate, or are planning a road trip, All State Insurance says that Cedar Rapids, Iowa, is the safest town in America to drive in. \*\*\*Unfortunately, there's nothing there worth driving to.

## **FEATURED FUNNIES**

### **12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS**

The pastor gave the children's story during the worship service. He used the "Twelve Days of Christmas" to make a point and said that a boy was so much in love with his girlfriend that he gave her a present 12 days in a row. The pastor really involved the children in this story by asking them what the gifts were day by day. They were doing quite well until they reached the eleventh day. There was a long pause, and finally one young boy raised his hand and gave the answer: "Eleven pastors preaching!"

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

### **Santa boycotted by children?!**

Hundreds of Bulgarian schoolchildren boycotted a visit by Santa Claus after he failed to grant their wishes for good exam grades the year before. Almost every child at the high school in Shoumen, in the north east of the country, had flocked to the specially built grotto last year to ask Santa for A grades in their exams. Afterwards many of the kids did not even study for their tests and were furious when they found they had failed. This year most kids boycotted the visit with only a small delegation of kids turning up wearing Santa beards made of their exam papers.

## **INSPIRATIONAL INSPIRATION**

### **CHRISTMAS, by [John Betjeman](#)**

*The bells of waiting Advent ring,*

*The Tortoise stove is lit again*

*And lamp-oil light across the night*

*Has caught the streaks of winter rain.*

*In many a stained-glass window sheen*

*From Crimson Lake to Hooker's Green.*

*The holly in the windy hedge  
And round the Manor House the yew  
Will soon be stripped to deck the ledge,  
The altar, font and arch and pew,  
So that villagers can say  
'The Church looks nice' on Christmas Day.*

*Provincial public houses blaze  
And Corporation tramcars clang,  
On lighted tenements I gaze  
Where paper decorations hang,  
And bunting in the red Town Hall  
Says 'Merry Christmas to you all'*

*And London shops on Christmas Eve  
Are strung with silver bells and flowers  
As hurrying clerks the City leave  
To pigeon-haunted classic towers,  
And marbled clouds go scudding by  
The many-steepled London sky.*

*And girls in slacks remember Dad,  
And oafish louts remember Mum,  
And sleepless children's hearts are glad,  
And Christmas morning bells say 'Come!'  
Even to shining ones who dwell  
Safe in the Dorchester Hotel.*

*And is it true? and is it true?  
The most tremendous tale of all,  
Seen in a stained-glass window's hue,  
A Baby in an ox's stall?  
The Maker of the stars and sea  
Become a Child on earth for me?*

*And is it true? For if it is,  
No loving fingers tying strings  
Around those tissueed fripperies,  
The sweet and silly Christmas things,  
Bath salts and inexpensive scent  
And hideous tie so kindly meant.*

*No love that in a family dwells,  
No carolling in frosty air,  
Nor all the steeple-shaking bells  
Can with this single Truth compare -  
That God was Man in Palestine  
And lives to-day in Bread and Wine.*

### **DRIVE TIME DEVOTIONAL**

***Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests". --Luke 2:13-14***

A couple of years ago, I clipped an article about how singing in the choir may have a noteworthy effect on your health. The University of California at Irvine found increased levels of disease-fighting proteins in the mouths of choir members after singing some choral masterpieces. This protein boost seemed directly related to the singers' states of mind, which was described as happy or euphoric. I'm sure that every choir director in the land clipped this article to show to his or her choirs.

Speaking of choirs, can you even imagine the size of the great company of the heavenly host that appeared to the shepherds that night long ago on the hill outside of Bethlehem? Can you imagine a choir that would fill the sky? I know our translation today doesn't mention the heavenly host singing, but I have to imagine that to hear them must have seemed like music.

Praise music so wonderful to change those shepherds. Praise music so beautiful that it moved those shepherds to go to the manger. And I guess music so powerful to make the shepherds healthier. Why not?

## **LEFTOVERS**

### **MAKEUP TEST**

**Darlene Jespersen believes that unless you are a clown, your boss doesn't have the right to make you wear makeup.**

... but that's the position she says she's in. Jespersen says she was fired from her job as a bartender at Harrah's casino in Reno, Nevada -- because she refuses to wear makeup. She says she's always clean and well groomed, but never uses cosmetics. After 21 years on the job, Jespersen says she was humiliated because she refused to "look like a clown." She claims to be a victim of sex discrimination -- noting that men aren't required to wear makeup on the job. A spokesman for the casino won't comment on the specifics of the case. But he says customers want Harrah's female workers to look good and wear makeup.

## **LIFE... LIVE IT**

### **READ THESE DIRECTIONS**

**A few tips for dad – before he tackles the assembling of toys this Christmas!**

The dads who read Men's Health magazine have spent hundreds of Christmas Eves assembling toys -- from basketball hoops to Easy-Bake Ovens. Dads (okay, MEN in general) know the agony of the missing part, of directions translated from Farsi, of batteries not included. Here's what you can learn from our mistakes:

- o Always read the directions before starting. Men often find themselves at step 63, only to realize that the triangle thingies should have gone on the axle doohickeys before the linchpins were inserted into the sprocket slots.
- o Disassembling is guaranteed to take the wind out of your wassails.
- o Have a Phillips-head screwdriver, a hammer, and pliers handy. No improvising with kitchenware. Using a corkscrew on a bike chain brings no comfort or joy.
- o Spread a white sheet on the floor and arrange the parts in groups. It's easy to lose parts in the pattern of the Oriental rug.
- o Don't tighten any screws or nuts until you've finished. A little wiggle room really helps.
- o Beware of these warning signs: Banging a screw with your heel; turning a bolt with your teeth; sweating profusely; feeling your blood pulse in your temples. If you begin to experience any of these warning signs, it's time to put down the Allen key.

## **JUST FOR FUN**

### **DARREN MARLAR HOLIDAY EATING PLAN**

Everybody is so cautious and concerned about gaining weight during the holidays... which is sad, because that takes some of the joy out of the season. This is the one time of the year that you should throw all caution to the wind and enjoy yourself. So, I've come up with my own diet... the *Darren Marlar Holiday Eating Plan*. Here are the rules:

- o **Carrot sticks** - avoid them. Anyone who puts carrots on a holiday buffet table knows nothing of the Christmas spirit. In fact if you see carrots, leave immediately. Go next door, where they're serving carrot cake instead.
- o **Drink as much eggnog as you can. And quickly.** Like anything else worthy of having in this world, it's rare. In fact, it's even rarer than diamonds. You can't find it any other time of year but now. So drink up! Who cares that it has 10,000 calories in every sip?
- o **If something comes with gravy, use it.** That's the whole point of gravy. Gravy does not stand alone. Pour it on. Make a volcano out of your mashed potatoes. Fill it with gravy. Eat the volcano. Repeat.
- o **As for mashed potatoes,** always ask if they're made with skim milk or whole milk. If it's skim milk, pass. Why bother? It's like buying a sports car with an automatic transmission.
- o **Do not have a snack before going to a party in an effort to control your eating.** The whole point of going to a Christmas party is to eat other people's food for free. Remember college? It's like that.
- o **Under no circumstances should you exercise between now and New Years.** You can do that in January when you have nothing else to do. Now is the time for long naps, which you'll need after circling the buffet table while carrying a 10-pound plate of food and that vat of eggnog.

- ***If you come across something really good at a buffet table***, like frosted Christmas cookies in the shape and size of Santa, position yourself near them and don't budge. Have as many as you can before becoming the center of attention.
- ***Same goes for pies. Apple. Pumpkin. Mincemeat.*** Have a slice of each. Or, if you don't like mincemeat, have two apples and one pumpkin. Always have three slices. When else do you get to have more than one dessert? Certainly not Labor Day.

## **FUN LIST**

### **NAME THESE TUNES!**

***Each of these synonyms is a common Christmas song or saying. How many can you translate?***

- Move hitherward the entire assembly of those who are loyal in their belief. (Oh Come All Ye Faithful)
- Listen, the celestial messengers produce harmonious sounds. (Hark The Herald Angels Sing)
- Nocturnal time-span of unbroken quietness. (Silent Night)
- An emotion excited by the acquisition or expectation of good given to the terrestrial sphere. (Joy To The World)
- Embellish the interior passageways. (Deck The Halls)
- Exalted heavenly beings to whom hearkened. (Hark The Herald Angels Sing)
- Twelve o'clock on a clement night witnessed its arrival. (It Came Upon A Midnight Clear)
- The Christmas preceding all others. (The First Noel)
- Small municipality in Judea southeast of Jerusalem. (Oh Little Town of Bethlehem)
- Diminutive masculine master of skin-covered percussive cylindrical instruments. (Little Drummer Boy)
- Omnipotent supreme being who elicits respite to ecstatic distinguished males. (God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen)
- Tranquility upon the terrestrial sphere. (Peace On Earth)
- Obese personification fabricated of compressed mounds of minute crystals. (Frosty The Snowman)
- Expectation of arrival to populated area by mythical masculine perennial gift-giver. (Here Comes Santa Claus)
- Natal celebration devoid of color. (White Christmas)
- In awe of the nocturnal time span characterized by religiosity. (Oh Holy Night)
- Geographic state of fantasy during the season of mother nature's dormancy. (Winter Wonderland)
- The first person nominative plural of a triumvirate of far eastern heads of state. (We Three Kings)
- Tintinnabulation of vacillating pendulums in inverted metallic, resonant cups. (Jingle Bells)
- In a distant location the existence of an improvised unit of newborn children's slumber furniture. (Away In A Manger)
- Proceed forth declaring upon a specific geological alpine formation. (Go Tell It On A Mountain)
- Jovial Yuletide desired for the second person singular or plural by us. (We Wish You A Merry Christmas)

## **MORE SHOW PREP STUFF...**

### **HOLIDAY PARTY TIPS**

***If you're throwing a Christmas party in the next couple of days, keep listening... I have some helpful advice for you to make that Christmas party easier for you and more entertaining for your guests!***

Well, It is holiday time, which means that it's holiday hosting time. So I have some tips that will make your holiday get-together special, based on my experiences as a successful party host. (I'll pause for my bride to stop laughing...)

- Spend as little time in the kitchen as possible. At my parties, I want to be mingling with my guests, making sure that everybody is enjoying him or herself and relaxing myself. Plus I have to stay out of the kitchen as part of my plea bargain with the health department.
- Don't avoid serving pre-cooked food. I always go down to a good professional bakery to pick up desert, I get my salads from a local deli, and I do the same with my appetizers. In fact, the last party I had, the RSVP card indicated right on it "Original" or "Extra Crispy."
- And finally, for maximum enjoyment for everyone, mix and match your friends: Like everybody else, my friends are divided up into groups based on their interest. So I like to take a few friends from one group, and introduce them to friends from another group. The most interesting dinner party I threw included some of the members of my bride's Pampered Chef club and some of the guys who come over to my house to watch Wrestling Pay Per View events. We'll remember that Christmas the rest of our lives....

## **OTHER STUFF I WANT TO CRAM INTO TODAY'S PREP**

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

## **SOUL-GLO**

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

## **TOTALLY OUTRAGEOUS!**

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

## **AND I LEAVE YOU WITH THIS THOUGHT**

I've decided to start treating my work responsibilities a bit differently, and I'm taking my cue from the late great Mark Twain. "Never put off until tomorrow what you can do the day after tomorrow."

## **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](http://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 updated 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 Waters. "Film Stars Don't Die In Liverpool" is rated R. Rating of 2 for fans.

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