



Merry Christmas

From

The Bowers House

Writers Guild

The following are stories written by some members for a special Holiday meeting. The anonymously written stories were randomly drawn and read to the group. Following the reading, members tried to guess the authors of each story. It was a fun game and most were surprised at how difficult it was to correctly identify the authors.

We think you might like reading them as much as we did. Enjoy!
And have a safe and wonderful Christmas Season.

Charles

Linda

Sharon

Carolyn

Janice

Maxine

Bonnie

Pam

Lois

A Special Christmas Season

As we grow older, we begin to reminisce about the things that brought us excitement and joy in our youth and childhood. As I lie in bed, a distant train whistle sounds, and I know tonight will bring sweet dreams of a special Christmas season long ago.

It was still dark when the alarm clock sounded its piercing notice that it was time to rise. Our departure time was 7:00 AM. The night had been one of tossing and turning with thoughts somersaulting through my mind. My clothes were laid across the chair ready for me to slip into.

Unlike today, where flip flops, shorts and tee shirts are acceptable travel attire, much thought had gone into the clothes I would be wearing. Of course white gloves would be a must, my best red sweater, since it was almost Christmas, shiny, new black patent leather shoes and the thing that would complete my outfit was the fluffy, white muff I had received for my seventh birthday in November.

At the small train depot in our town, the atmosphere was magical. A very large magnolia tree was covered with strings of multicolored lights as large as oranges. The glow was visible from blocks away. A thin icy fog gave everything a dreamy make believe quality. Friends and neighbors, filled with the holiday spirit, milled about the station, most of them on their way to Atlanta for Christmas shopping.

The station platform, where we all stood waiting, began to vibrate. A faint train whistle was heard in the distance and the clackety-clack of iron wheels on rails was growing louder and louder. The magnificent, shiny, new Silver Comet came thundering and roaring into our small station. My first train ride was about to begin. I would soon be on my way to visit my Atlanta cousins.

People began moving toward a neatly uniformed man taking tickets, and just as the last person climbed the steps, our ticket taker began to announce, ALL ABOARD. A loud blast of the whistle signaled we were on our way. I may not have slept the night before, but there were no thoughts of sleep at a time like this. Who knew what might be missed, if I dared to take a nap.

We had just the right amount of time to enjoy breakfast in the dining car. This required us walking to an adjoining car as the train swayed rhythmically back and forth on its speedy trip to our destination. What elegance my eyes beheld as we entered the dining car. Wait staff in snowy uniforms stood at attention ready to attend to our every need. There were crisp white tablecloths and napkins, plushy upholstered chairs, gleaming silver and beautiful white China with gold rims. I was so awed by my surroundings, I have no idea what I ate.

When we arrived in Atlanta, after what seemed like a very short trip, it was like nothing I had ever experienced before. Terminal Station was a cavernous, ornate building that seemed to go on forever. My senses were overwhelmed by the varied sights and sounds. The smell was unique to that particular place. There was an enchanted mingling of pungent smells of grease and oil from the trains and equipment, cigar and cigarette smoke, shoe polish from the shoe shine stands and the sweat and grime from the mass of passengers, conductors and red caps. The entire area seethed with hustle and bustle. Loud sounds from

other trains and the throng of passengers, made conversation impossible. These smells and sounds left a lasting memory.

My name is being called, and when I look up, there are my cousins. Hugs and kisses are freely passed back and forth, as we head off for a fun filled weekend visit.

Seventy years later, as my eyes grow heavy and sleep is near, I can smell that smell and hear those sounds. Yes, tonight the Silver Comet and I will be riding the rails. ALL ABOARD!

Linda

RED IS THE COLOR OF...

Twas the night before Christmas. Although Russell was more-or-less snug in his bed, there sure weren't visions of sugar plums dancing in his head. He'd been tossing and turning for hours, alternately pulling the covers over his head or staring out the window into the dark night. No wintry sparkle of stars and no cold moon casting its silvery light brought any relief in that frigid black sky. When he closed his eyes, he tried counting sheep — even tried counting Christmas bulbs on an imaginary tree — but the feelings of purposelessness and loneliness remained. This was going to be a long night

Flinging the covers back, Russell rose from his rumpled bed and wrapped his long angular body in a robe. The thick socks on his feet scuffed along the hard wood floor as he began to pace back and forth before the window. The cold square of glass was devoid of curtains, or any embellishment that would make it look more homey. What was the point? This place wasn't home and it never would be. No place had ever felt like home. Circumstances being what they were, he did consider himself fortunate to have a roof over his head and the means to keep it warm and lit. At the beginning of this year, Russell was informed that his grandfather had bequeathed this monstrosity of a house to him. Ha! Bequeathed. That word sounded so loving, caring, giving — as if he'd ever met the man or knew of his existence. Where was he all those years Russell had spent in foster homes, alone, with no family?

Russell stopped before the window and ran his fingers through his hair. He grabbed two hunks and pulled, then released a frustrated breath. What was he supposed to do with this inheritance? With his life? The house was full of many rooms and just like always, he was still alone.

A tiny flash of bright red light caught his attention. He peered out, but saw nothing. Shrugging, he resumed his pacing. Another brighter flash had him stopping in his tracks, one foot raised. He watched as the flash became a glow. It was moving out from the woods behind the house and coming closer. Russell stared, pressing his face close to the glass, trying to discern what it was and what it could be attached to. When his breath fogged up the window, blocking his view, he rubbed the glass clear with his sleeve. Now the light was just outside his window. To his astonishment, it softly illuminated the inquisitive face and

large rack of antlers that rose above the head...of a reindeer. Its square nose shone brightly and *very red!*

The reindeer dipped its head, then turned and took a step away. Casting a look back over its shoulder, it caught Russell's eyes. When he didn't move, the deer stomped his foot impatiently. *What? He was supposed to follow him? Yeah, right.*

Whipping about, the reindeer faced Russell directly through the glass, its large brown eyes full of warmth and intelligence. They were very compelling brown eyes. Irresistible brown eyes. Russell found himself heading for his dresser, grabbing a warm sweater and pulling it over his head. Glancing back toward the window, he saw the deer was watching him. He slipped into his discarded jeans then shoved his feet into his boots. He turned back to the window. *Yup, still there.*

Now, with a strange sense of urgency, he hurried from his room, passed through the living room with its unlit fireplace and on into the kitchen. The old man must have had some elaborate meals cooked for him, judging from the size of the room and quantity of utensils. Copper-bottomed pots and pans hung from a rack above the center island. He passed the huge built-in refrigerator and massive six-burner stove on his way to the back door. Grabbing his coat from a hook, he stepped out onto the covered deck. There it was, that nose, if possible, shining even brighter

Feeling a bit apprehensive, but overwhelmingly caught up in the magic of the moment, Russell addressed the reindeer with a laugh. "So, my guess is that your name is Rudolph." He got a reindeer bow in reply, then that impatient stamp of a hoof Rudolph turned and Russell followed him to the wide strip of woods which separated his house from the main road in town. The air was cold and still. The only sound was the crunch of his boots in the snow. Soon he could see Christmas lights twinkling from store fronts and homes. They passed through the woods and entered this ordinary town in the mountains of Pennsylvania.

It was late. The streets were empty, the town quiet, yet a holiday feeling of anticipation seemed to hang in the air.

"Now what?" asked Russell, his breath coming out in foggy white puffs.

Rudolph dropped his head, swung his antlers to the right and slowly moved down hill to the center of town. Soon a covered bus stop appeared and Rudolph headed directly toward it. A few feet behind it he stopped. Following another head swinging indication, Russell walked around to the front of the enclosure. To his surprise, he found three children seated there, arms wrapped around one another. The oldest, a girl, appeared to be in her early teens. Two small boys, one on either side of her, looked up at him. Her look was defiant. The boys just looked scared.

Russell glanced back at Rudolph. He swung his antlers and took a step forward. Russell returned his gaze to the three children. "Don't you know there's no bus coming until tomorrow? Where are you going? Where's your parents?"

In answer, the girl pulled the boys closer and turned her head away from him. Russell knelt before them on one knee. Resting an elbow on the other knee, he said. "Look, you can't stay here all night. You're all shivering. You need some warm food and a safe place to

stay.” No response. “I live just through those woods.” The girl gave him a quelling look and snorted.

Russell searched his pockets in the vain hope that he had his cell phone with him. Coming up empty, he said. “I can't just leave you here. Why don't you come with me and we can call your parents.”

“Don't have any,” said the bigger of the two boys.

“Shush.” The girl gave him a shake.

“Where do you live?” asked Russell. “I could take you there.”

The girl shook her head vehemently. “We're not going back there!”

Russell huffed in frustration. He could understand why they didn't trust him, a strange man. He looked again at Rudolph, who snorted. Russell turned back to the three huddled before him. “Look, I get why you don't trust me, but maybe you would trust my friend?” Now Russell tossed his head, indicating that Rudolph should come closer.

Three pairs of eyes grew huge as a large reindeer with a tall rack of antlers and a glowing red nose appeared. Russell smiled. “He's certainly not one of the eight tiny reindeer, but he's got the nose... and the magic.”

“Wow,” the three said in unison as they quickly stood. The wonder that washed their faces seemed to scrub away their fear.

Nodding his head in an encouraging way, Rudolph began to lead them back to Russell's house. The girl grasped a hand of each of the boys as they eagerly fell in behind. Russell could swear he saw some kind of enchanted red sparkle in the atmosphere all around them. As he, too, came under the healing spell of that light-filled air, the seed of a dream took root in his heart — a vision of what his life could be. Children in need of a home. A big house full of many empty rooms needing to be filled. At last his life purpose had made itself known.

They arrived at his home. *Home*, thought Russell, as more ideas tumbled about in his head. He could create his own home and fill it with hope and possibilities, love and light, peace and joy. He would paint the front door red. Red was the color of all these good things. It was the color of his new life.

Rudolph stopped and slowly moved about to face Russell and the children. Now his warm brown eyes were filled with expectation and delight. He bowed low before the four of them...this collectively tender, life-changing, new beginning. Rudolph stood upright and they watched in fascination as he began to rise into the air and gradually disappeared until nothing remained but a soft red glow in each of their hearts.

Sharon

The Best Worst Christmas

Thanksgiving dinner was over. The kitchen had been tidied up and the leftovers tucked away in the refrigerator. With a smile on her face, Esther stood in the kitchen

doorway and watched her four small children lying on the living room floor, their noses buried in the Christmas catalogs that had arrived in the mail that week. This was the highlight of their year, the weeks of anticipation leading up to the most wonderful of all days—Christmas. Esther knew that lists would be made, items added, items crossed off, items un-crossed off—hours, days, and weeks of joyous fun spent mesmerized by those endless pages of wondrous toys. The children were so happy and content, safe in their childish world. Their biggest worry would be how long could they pore over these incredible catalogs each evening and still manage to get their homework done. Esther's worries were far greater. Esther and her husband Joe were not poor, but once necessities were bought, there was little money, if any, left over. Now with the company Joe worked for out on strike this year, she had no idea how in the world she was going to be to produce the magical Christmas that the children had come to expect. It nearly broke her heart to think of disappointing her children.

Later that evening when the children had been tucked into bed and kissed good night, Esther sat on the couch holding the lists that each of her children had begun. She smiled at their childish handwriting and misspellings, but noticed that on her two daughter's lists, there wasn't the usual new baby doll requested. She casually questioned her daughters the next morning at breakfast about this fact and they both were quite adamant that they did NOT want a new doll this year. They dearly loved their old dolls, Sharon and Susie, and they did not want them replaced. This gave Esther an idea about a wonderful gift she could give her daughters and it wouldn't cost a cent. Esther had always made all of her children's school clothes and had all the scraps left over from this summer's sewing. She could make little Sharon and Susie a complete wardrobe out of these remnants that would match her daughters' outfits. It would be perfect — the girls were going to be so surprised and so happy!

For the next few weeks, after the children were tucked into bed each night, Esther would spend hours at the sewing machine creating this special surprise. As she completed each dress, she would try it on the doll to make sure that it fit properly. At last, just a few days before Christmas, the project was completed. As she was trying the last dress on the dolls that evening, she took a more careful look at Sharon and Susie. Oh my! How could she have missed how bedraggled those poor dolls were! She had been so busy sewing, focusing only on the dresses, that she had not noticed what an absolute mess the dolls hair was. Their hair was made of three rows of hair plugs circling their head, then the hair was pulled into a pony tail/bun on top of their head. With the ribbon lost that had held the hair, the girls had tried to fasten it up with a rubber band and it looked quite horrible. Even with the new dresses, these dolls looked awful. In a flash of inspiration, Esther decided with the little money she had left to spend on Christmas, she would buy Sharon and Susie doll wigs. Her daughters would be delighted to see their beloved dolls restored to their original beauty. She ordered a blond one for Sharon and a brunette one for Susie to match her daughters' hair. When they arrived, Esther was delighted.

The night before Christmas, Esther tiptoed into her daughters' bedroom and carefully retrieved Sharon and Susie from her daughters' arms. She got out her scissors and cut the ugly frazzled hair from their heads, leaving only 3 rows of stubbly bristles. She got out her glue and slathered it on the dolls bald heads and carefully tried to position the wigs in place. But to her horror, the wigs did not fit — they were too small! Oh my God, what had

she done? She had destroyed her daughters' precious dolls and Christmas was ruined. With a heavy heart, Esther turned out the lights, went to bed and cried into her pillow until she fell asleep.

A daughter's note: I am Esther's oldest daughter and Sharon was my doll. My memory of this Christmas is just the opposite of my mother's. This was one of my favorite Christmases—the year my Mom painstakingly made all those beautiful dresses for my beloved doll. What a wonderful gift. Our dolls' hair really was quite awful, so they actually looked better without any! My sister and I dressed our bald Sharon and Susie in their new clothes and played with them and loved them for many years after that special Christmas. Each year they became more and more bedraggled but we loved those dolls so we didn't really notice. All we saw was our precious dolls in their beautiful clothes made with love by the best mother in the whole world.

Pam

A Trip Down the Chimney

(Almost)

Many years ago when I was a young girl my friend asked me to spend the night with her and another friend. It was a Friday night and it was very close to Christmas. We had a very hard time paying attention in school that day because we were too excited making our plans for what we were going to do that night. When the time finally arrived for me to go to her house I was beyond excited. Her mother was going out for the evening and she had a sitter to stay with the three of us.

Every room of her house was decorated beautifully for the Christmas holidays. That just added to our excitement. First of all we had our dinner, just what we wanted, hot dogs and potato chips. We even had dessert, cookies and ice cream. After that we got busy with our own plans for the night. Now, I don't know how much experience you have had supervising three young girls but our sitter had not had any. We told her just to go in the other room and we would be just fine.

We played dress-up and while we were doing that our talk turned to Christmas. Of course, we were too old to really believe in Santa Clause but we did discuss the possibilities of a fat, old man coming down the chimney with a bag full of toys on his back. The three of us each expressed our belief that it would be impossible regardless of what the stories and our parents said. This discussion continued and we got to the place that we needed to prove that this couldn't be done. Well, the only way we could do that would be for us to go up on the roof and one of us to go down the chimney.

Like I said, if you haven't had any experience with three eight year old girls making up their minds to do something then you probably don't understand determination. They completely forgot about the dress-up characters they were pretending to be. They immediately became Santa and his elves. Now the word fear was not in their vocabulary.

Words like adventure, challenge, fun, and excitement were definitely part of their conversation.

The next thing to do was to decide who would go down the chimney. Getting to the roof was no problem since we had done that before. We would just climb out the window to a flat part of the roof and walk over to the chimney. Before climbing out the window it was decided that since I was the smallest I would be the first to go down the chimney and the other two would follow. We changed into our pajamas because that would be more like Christmas morning.

The weather was not a problem even though it was December this was south Georgia. OK. We were ready. Pajamas on, pillow case full of toys, plans made, out the window we go. I go first. We were giggling as all little girls do. We were reminded to be as quiet as we could so we would not disturb the sitter. We approached the chimney and in spite of our giggling and dragging the pillow case we had to decide how to climb up to get in the chimney. The other two girls were going to lift me up and I would sit on the edge of the chimney and then put my feet inside. I did that and as I was sitting on the edge of the chimney with my feet inside something unplanned happened. The sitter came looking for us. She thought we were too quiet.

When we were not in the room where we were supposed to be she got concerned. We had made a mistake and left the window open. The next thing we knew her head was out the window and she was yelling for us to get inside! She threatened to call all of our mothers if we did not come inside. We had no choice but to go inside but we were not happy about it. After we got inside and she calmed down we started making our plans for the next escapade.

Lois

Remembering Christmas

It was a cold Christmas Eve back in the late 1950's and we three sisters couldn't wait until Christmas morning. In fact, we went to bed early thinking Santa would come on if we did and deliver our gifts and the fruit and candy. Yum Yum! However, our daddy decided he would stay up and watch his favorite show, Bonanza. Daddy was usually the first to go to bed because of having to wake early to milk the cows. We were hoping Daddy wouldn't want to watch it that night. Our bedroom was right around the corner of the living room where the beautiful Christmas tree was decorated with lights, garland and tinsel. We kept hearing the antics of Little Joe, Hoss and Adam. Would that show ever end?

Finally, we heard Daddy get up and turn the tv off. We laid there as still and quiet as we could for what seemed forever.

My younger sister Pat couldn't stand it any longer. She quietly laid the blankets and quilt aside and crawled to the bottom of the bed and stood on the cedar chest that was at the foot of the bed.

She could peep right around the doorway into the living room. At the same time, Daddy was standing peeping in our bedroom to see if we were asleep. My sister and he bumped heads. Daddy said, if you girls don't go to sleep, Santa will never come.

Janice

Christmas

I have so many memories occurring surrounding this day and one I especially remember happened in 1954, when I was twelve years old.

My immediate family lived in Elberton, Georgia. Our home was on a busy street where cars, and the inevitable granite trucks, passed on a regular basis.

One of the natural happenings in this season was when my family went to see Nona, my paternal grandmother. We always called it 'going to the country' for she lived in the rural community of Palmetto in Oglethorpe County and there was not a lot of traffic on that dirt road.

Her name was Verona but all the adults in that area called her Miss Rona. After her first grandchild was born, that granddaughter kept hearing Miss Rona, which she couldn't pronounce, so she just said Nona. And that's the name by which she was called by her other twelve grandchildren.

I said we always went to Nona's house. It never occurred to me that we were going to the home of daddy's sister, husband and son and that Nona lived in their home. Nona's husband had died when the last of her seven children was only four years old. All her life she lived in rented houses and worked the fields to support her family. There was no such thing as Social Security then and anyway, she had never worked a public job to received a paycheck to qualify.

In the summer of that year that family, along with Nona, had moved to Enterprise, Georgia which was about five miles up the road.

When we got there on the Saturday before Christmas all the family had gathered, from Rayle, Elberton, Washington and Warner Robins. There was a huge decorated cedar tree in the living room and there were presents for every grandchild under it each stating that it was from Nona. We couldn't wait to open them. It never occurred to me that Nona could not have purchased twelve presents. I realized many years later that the presents had to have been supplied by our own parents.

But, we had to EAT before we could open presents! All the mamas had brought dishes to go with the food Nona and my aunt provided. It wasn't always turkey and dressing, or ham, for all those uncles were hunters and we had rabbit, squirrel, bird and maybe someone had even brought a meatloaf.

Dessert was always so special because it was homemade fruitcake, coconut cake, Lane cake or chocolate pie, which had been cooked on the wood stove. We also had ambrosia made of fresh oranges, fresh coconut, grapes, and pecans with some raisins out of a box thrown in. It was so-o-o good!!

Then we children had to wait for our mother's to clean off the table and wash dishes before we could open presents!!

Finally, we sat on the floor near the tree and one uncle called the name designated on each gift. That day mine was something I had already asked Santa Claus for - a pair of white fuzzy balls, attached to black velvet strands that you wore around your neck. I was so thrilled, now I could look like a teen-ager when I wore them to school!

Carolyn

HOLIDAY SURPRISE

For a Purpose

The tree aglitter with ribbons and strands of beads stood in the corner of the living room like an adorned bride awaiting her groom. The cedar tree as prickly as whiskers grew for three seasons from one cedar seed along the bank of the river with many others. Of blue ribbon quality, nourished by the sun and rain, strengthened and straightened by the winds and weather it was chosen for the special celebration. Chopped down and carried by vehicle from the work site to the home of the event, it's natural appearance alone spoke of anticipation. Dressed and decorated along with rooms of greenery, lights, ornaments, inviting smells, laughter and songs, its purpose seemed to be met.

During the night hours, quiet and calm, the family slept contented as cats napping in warm sunshine. In the living room night visitors were stirring though no one knew until morning. From a branch of the bedecked tree an egg sac, carefully placed by a willing praying mantis sometime earlier, hatched in the warmth of the home like a huge incubator. The rustle and glimmer of the tree acknowledged another purpose in it's being as tiny creatures emerged from the paper-like sac, launching from the prickly branches to new adventures.

By morning, those rising from sleep, found oodles of miniature praying mantis all over the living room and adjoining rooms. Here and there and everywhere tiny nymphs with folded hands like cloistered nuns, prepared for daily prayers.

These brown midget aliens protected by environmental law, like Lilliputians, watched through beady eyes as Gulliver-size human beings cautiously and squeamishly evacuated them to freedom outside the house.

The bedecked tree, too, was assigned to the back driveway where she reined as Queen of Christmas Day personifying Mother Nature, proud, beautiful, and pontifical, completing the birthing of new life. Like Owen Meany, an implied miracle in John Irving's story and born for a purpose, so the little cedar tree from a seed that danced on the winds and settled in the ground was created for the purpose of sheltering and bringing forth life and JOY! All this on the day of celebration of the birth of the creator of all things visible and invisible.

Bonnie

The Perils of St. Nicholas

Nicholas struggled from the front door to his recliner and plopped down exhausted from the day's trials and tribulations.

"Nicholas is that you?" Asked a voice from the kitchen.

"Yeah. I think so, it's been such a hectic day I don't know who I am," Nicholas replied. He loaded his pipe, lit it and inhaled a puff of the pungent smoke.

"Phew, yuck, that, that tobacco smoke smells terrible," said Gertrude, fanning the smoke as she came in to greet him. "Ugh, where d'you get that stuff anyhow?"

"The guys from the shop got it for me on their trip to Columbia last year. I know it smells bad," said Nicholas. "Cough... But it sure does make me feel better," he mumbled.

"I know that trip caused a lot of trouble, but what was so bad today?" Asked Gertrude.

"Those darn reindeer are acting up, there's a squabble between Rudolph and the rest of them. Somebody told Pepper that Rudolph's nose was on fire and he threw a bucket of water in his face to put it out."

"Why do they pick own Pepper, he's a sweet little guy just not too smart," said Gertrude.

"I don't know it's just a way of life these days. Really though, it's Rudolph's fault, he can be such a smart-alec. You would think as much as he was picked on early in his life he would show more empathy and get along instead of trying to be such a big deal... Smoking makes me hungry, what's for supper?"

Gertrude said, "Reindeer burgers!" Nicholas frowned. "Just kidding ha-ha... beef stew and noodles with Sugarplum pudding for dessert."

Like most nights lately, Nicholas had trouble sleeping that night. The Sugarplums dancing in his head prompted only restless thoughts about the last year and all the troubles they've been through.

Major troubles began with that trip the crew made to Columbia. He really didn't want to let them go but Elfin, who was recently elected their leader, insisted. He went on about how the guys worked hard all year long and needed some time off in a nice warm climate. Elfin had nothing but good things to say about Columbia and his friends there, so Nicholas gave in. They stayed longer than they were supposed to and it didn't help their disposition at all, fact is, it made it worse.

Sugarplum Mary got pregnant and don't even know by whom. Elfin says that he didn't stay at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel where Sugarplum Mary stayed while they were in Columbia. The quarreling and fussing hasn't stopped. Some say he did others say he didn't, Sugarplum don't remember anything. Elfin claims he is the victim of a witch hunt headed

by someone named Crooked Celery who is colluding with the Grinch. Others claim that Elfin and the Grinch are friends and he is the one colluding.

While it's true, the Grinch has tried to disrupt things at the North Pole for a long time, Nicholas can't believe that his lead elf would become involved in collusion with the Grinch toward that goal. He must admit the evidence is beginning to point in that direction. Even Pepper told Rudolph it was Elfin who told him to throw the water on him. And who is it that has been stirring up the trouble between Rudolph and the other reindeer? And why does he keep saying there's no collusion over and over and blaming Crooked Celery?

The timing couldn't be worse. In a few days, it will be time for major deliveries around the world. Hopefully we'll be ready and when it's over, I can get this all straightened out and make 2019 a better year for everyone. *Perhaps I'll make a stopover in Columbia this year for a look around. I need some more that foul-smelling tobacco anyway.*

Charles

The Runaway Wheelchair

The man awoke that morning with a smile on his face. This was very unusual for him he was a quiet person .

After he had eaten breakfast and done the outside chores, he told why he was so cheerful.

He had a daughter that could not walk and she liked to be outside with the other children doing the fun things that all children do. They liked to play with the little red wagon. The oldest girl was usually in the wagon, because she could not walk like the other brothers and sisters could, having fun. Over the hills, thru the woods, wherever they went they carried her with them.

She was given a wheel chair, by a well to do uncle, that she could have a better way to go anywhere she wanted to go and not have to depend upon the red wagon for her way of being with the rest of the children playing.

There was a man that traveled around the country with a wagon pulled by goats, he had passed by the old man's house a few days before and stopped by to show off his wares and hopefully sell some of his wares to this family. He stayed around for a while talking about traveling. He had several extra goats that was tied to the wagon that he changed out, as he said, when the others got tired of pulling the wagon.

The man had dreamed that the children were playing in the yard and tied a goat to the wheelchair so they would not have to pull the wheelchair like they did the wagon. The goat took the wheelchair into the highway and was going down the road with the wheelchair and the girl. Everyone was chasing them trying to catch the wheelchair.

They got to the top of the hill, everyone in hot pursuit, they were in top speed, going down the hill. Everyone, including him, was trying to catch them. Every time anyone got close to them the goat would dodge them making the wheelchair rise up on two wheels as they swayed to dodge the man and children in pursuit of them.

He woke from the dream laughing so hard he could not tell anyone why. All he would say was "I dreamed... Then start laughing.

It was a long time before he could tell the dream without starting to laugh so that he could not talk about it. The mention of the dream always brought a smile to his face.

Many years later someone asked him about the dream and he just smiled, he could not talk.

Maxine