

'Tis the Season

Shoppers purchase with care

By LAURA CARTER
Staff Writer

Christmas shoppers this year are being much more careful in their purchases than in years past, a check of area stores showed, and the people that are buying are spreading the payments out on credit.

Clothes are big sellers and people seem to be buying more sweaters and jumpers this year, Fabra Hart, an employee of Brinkley's Pants Rack in University Mall, said. Shoppers are buying clothes in the middle price range, Hart said, and they are being careful buyers who are watching out for good sales.

Electronic games continue to be very big, and Simon is still the most popular, said Debbie Clark, assistant manager of Billy Arthur Inc. Another big seller this year is a Rubics Cube, Clark said. The game is designed for people from junior high age on up, and Clark said it was a very popular gift among the college-age customers.

Shoppers also are making more of their own gifts this year, Clark said. Needlepoint supplies are another big seller.

At the book store *The Official Preppy Handbook* by Lisa Birnbach is the biggest seller right now, a check of area bookstores showed. *Cosmos*, a book by Carl Sagan, who has a show on the Public Broadcasting Service by the same name, also is selling well, said an employee of the Intimate Bookstore on Franklin Street.

Area department stores are expecting a good Christmas season, and an employee of Belk-Leggett in University Mall said the crowds were bigger this year than she remembered them being last year.

"People still don't have the money to buy all the extras they would like to," she said. "But when Christmas rolls around they seem to rally and find the money for a few extra gift."

Even if they cannot seem to get the money together for Christmas gifts right away, people are still buying now with the hope of having the money to pay later.

"People are putting a lot of their purchases on layaway this year," said



Christmas shoppers at Radio Shack in University Mall ...the trend this season is toward buying on credit

Jane Galloway, an employee at Ivey's service desk. Things such as coats and higher-priced clothing are big layaway items, she said. People who put items up on layaway earlier this fall also are beginning to claim their purchases.

Credit cards are in use very much this time of year, and area stores report that shoppers are spending with plastic money just as much as they always have.

"Personally, I'm scared to buy on credit the way the economy has been messed up lately," an employee of a mall clothing store said. But the economy doesn't seem to be stopping most people. Even students, who usually

wouldn't think of even having credit cards, are charging their gifts, he said. One student said she planned to buy all her gifts on her credit card and pay the bill later when the money from a new job came in.

Even with an uncertain economic future and high interest rates for shoppers who use credit, people are still going out and buying Christmas gifts for family and friends. And if you're at a loss for the ideal Christmas gift, Debbie Clark of Billy Arthur's can give you a tip.

"Of course train sets are still selling well," Clark said.

Presents

Secret Santas creeping around campus

By ROANN BISHOP
Staff Writer

That guy who sneaked on to your floor or hall last night may have been one of several Secret Santas creeping around campus this year.

Members of clubs, sororities, fraternities and dorms said they played the Secret Santa game, in which someone went to another person's room each day and secretly gave him a gift. On the last day the Santa usually revealed himself at a party held for all the participants.

"Secret Santas is a good way to relieve some of the pressure associated with finals," Ann Cox, a member of Pi Beta

Phi sorority, said. The sisters ended their gift-giving Thursday. "It's fun to go out with other sisters and get light-hearted gifts to exchange with one another," she said.

"This is just one way of making us think about other people and what Christmas is really all about."

—Ann Cox

Thursday the sisters each dressed as Christmas characters and read poems which emphasized funny experiences the sisters were involved in.

"Students tend to get self-concerned during exams, and we forget about Christmas coming. This is just one way of making us think about other people and what Christmas is really all about," Cox said.

Kappa Alpha Theta sorority sisters also played Secret Santas at their house. A tradition in the exchange of gifts at the house is presents which emphasize the name of the sorority. Kites, the

symbol of the sorority, are prominent both in the ornaments on the Christmas tree and the gifts underneath.

Several other dorms and groups said they also played the game and would give the final gift at a Christmas party sometime before exams.

Merchants back annual parade

By FRANK ZANG
Staff Writer

With the holiday season approaching, Chapel Hill organizations are planning a variety of Christmas activities. The Chamber of Commerce, Morehead Planetarium and the Preservation Society are sponsoring events aimed at raising the yuletide spirits of students and residents.

More than 100 entries will take part in the 10th Chapel Hill Christmas parade, a Chamber of Commerce spokesman said. Local merchants will start the parade at 10 a.m.

Bands from Cary, Chapel Hill, Hillside, Northern and Southern Durham and Northwood high schools plus bands from Virginia Military Academy and the Naval ROTC will perform. Various scout troops and clowns from the Dunn and Carolina associations also will march.

The parade will start at the post office on Franklin Street and travel along Main Street to the Carrboro Town Hall. Free soft drinks will be available for everyone along the route.

Christmas decorations in Chapel Hill and Carrboro were put into operation Monday night. The town's Public Works Department donated its services to install the lighted wreaths. The decorations in Carrboro are new this year while the Chapel Hill wreaths were first used last year.

The Morehead Planetarium is showing its traditional Christmas program, "The Star of Bethlehem," through Jan. 12th. The annual show has been presented since 1949 and lasts approximately 30 minutes.

"The Star of Bethlehem" is probably one of the most beautiful seasonal programs given by any planetarium in the world," planetarium director Tony Jenzano said.

He said the show originally was developed at the Morehead Planetarium and that the story of the first Christmas is very realistic because it is three-dimensional. Jenzano said he urged local residents to view the performance on a less crowded week night since people come from as far as Virginia for weekend shows.

The Preservation Society is sponsoring candlelight tours of historic Chapel Hill houses from 4-8 p.m., Elizabeth Daniels, Horace Williams house coordinator, said. The tour features



One of the wreaths on Franklin Street ...Public Works Department put up decorations

nine homes including the Kemp Battle house, Cai Omega sorority, Horace Williams house and the residence of UNC President and Mrs. William Friday. Caroler, hot cider, cookies and musicians will be at some of the houses. Buses will be available for the tours and tickets will be good for both days. The candlelight tours have taken place for several years, Daniels said.

Greek service

Students work to make season special for many in community

By LYNN FEITHMAN
Staff Writer

"Everyone's waiting for the big event here — Santa Claus," sophomore Dave Habel said as he bounced his 5-year-old friend, Seth Spindel, on his shoulders.

Dave and Seth were at a party Wednesday afternoon for Campus Y Big Buddies. About 30 children and their Big Buddies came to the party sponsored by Delta Delta Delta Sorority and Beta Theta Pi fraternity. The Big Buddies are Carolina students who spend about a day a week with underprivileged children.

When Santa Claus, actually Beta Theta Pi member Bryan Morris, came, he was bombarded by the children who wanted some of the candy and cookies in his bag. Because of the children's eagerness, Santa eventually lost his beard and hat.

Santa also has appeared at other parties this week and other fraternities and sororities have done special projects for Christmas.

Alpha Delta Pi and Kappa Delta sororities

and Phi Gamma Delta fraternity have worked at the Christmas House, sponsored by the Chapel Hill Service League, where underprivileged families can get clothes and toys at a reduced price. Phi Gamma Delta members have stayed at the house at night to watch over the items and Alpha Delta Pi and Kappa Delta members have helped the families pick out what they wanted.

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"Just to get in the Christmas spirit," Chi Omega member Molly Wilmer said, the sorority had a Christmas party for some kindergarten children from University Baptist church. Sigma Epsilon fraternity is planning a Christmas party for between 70 and 80 children in the day-care center at the United Church on Cameron Avenue.

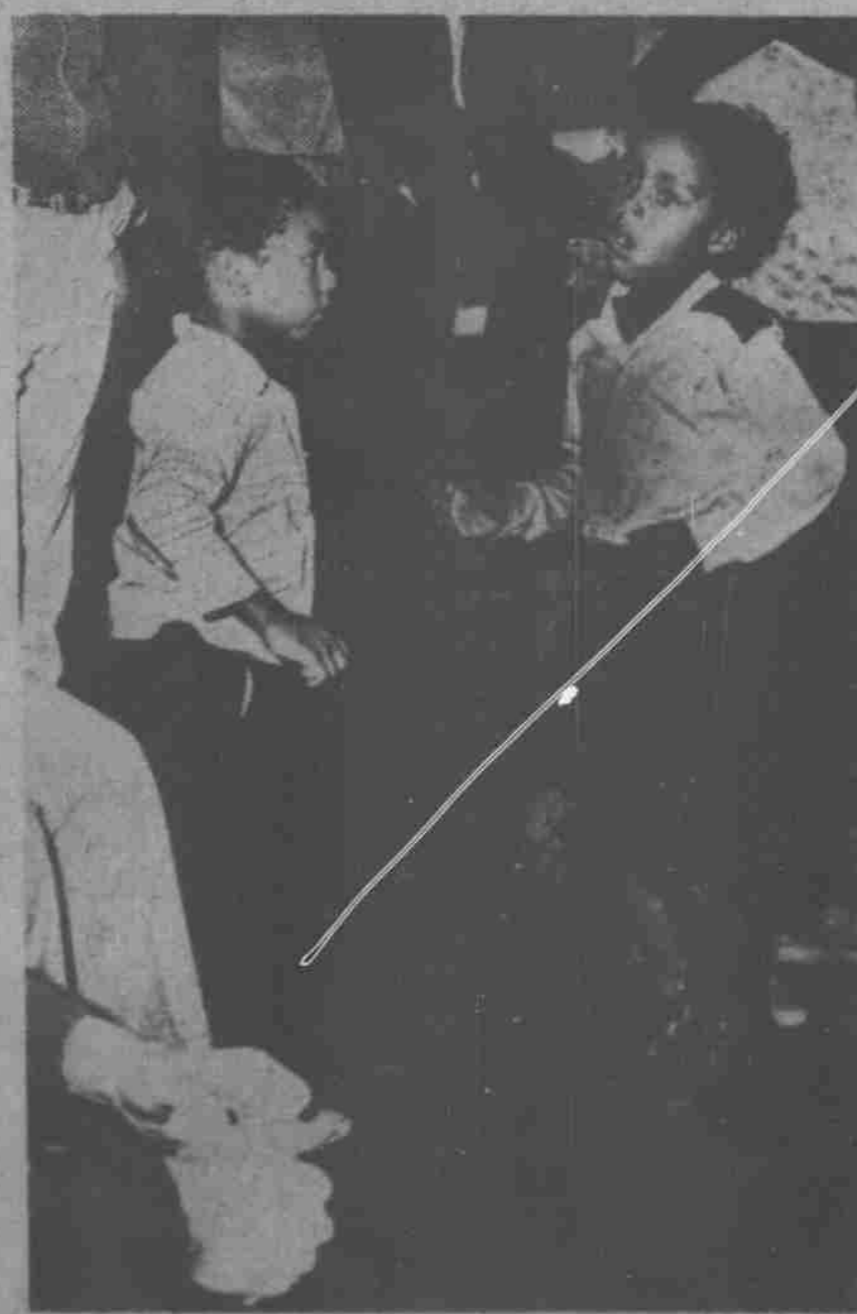
Sigma Sigma Sigma sorority, which

sponsors the playground on the pediatric floor at N.C. Memorial Hospital, will provide refreshments for a reception on the floor. Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority has made 300

edible ornaments for the tree in the children's ward of the hospital. Sorority members tied ribbon around candy canes and small bags filled with chocolate balls to hang on the tree.

Phi Mu sorority has gotten clothes, food, gifts and a decorated tree for a needy family. Kappa Delta bought, wrapped and sent presents to children at the Crippled Children's Hospital in Richmond, Va. They also had a party Wednesday afternoon with Tau Epsilon Phi fraternity for underprivileged children.

Delta Delta Delta had a Christmas Bazaar as well. They sold handmade gifts and the money from the project will go to the Children's Cancer Fund at N.C. Memorial Hospital. Kappa Psi fraternity is distributing packages of food to underprivileged people in the Chapel Hill community and Delta Sigma Theta sorority will be collecting shoes around campus for the Haitian refugees through Dec. 8.



Two youngsters get down to the music at one party ...holiday projects a big part of Greek activities

Post office advises: mail early

By DIANE LUPTON
Staff Writer

"Don't wait until the last minute." Although there are no absolute deadlines for mailing domestic mail, except to Alaska and Hawaii, post office and United Parcel Service workers recommend that people start soon on their Christmas mailing.

"The earlier people mail, the better off we are," said Robert Blackwood of the Chapel Hill Post Office. He advised those sending packages to mail them Dec. 8-12 to ensure their arrival by Christmas. He said if they were mailed during this time, they might arrive early, but they would be there in time.

Blackwood recommended sending cards and letters at least a week prior to Christmas although there are no deadlines.

There are standard acceptable sizes for packages and letters. The post office will not accept a card or letter that is less than 3 1/2 inches high and five inches long. Parcels are required to be no larger than a total length and girth of 84 inches and a weight of 40 pounds, unless they are priority mail.

The United Parcel Service recommends sending packages by the second week in December, according to a worker there. She said that UPS could not promise a date of arrival with packages sent later than that.

The reason for the early mailing is the volume of mail which goes through the post office during the Christmas season. Last year, in one day, the Chapel Hill Post Office handled of 153,074 pieces of mail, Blackwood said.

Finally, Blackwood said good quality wrapping is the key to having a package arrive safely. He recommended a well-stuffed heavy corrugated box, taped with either fiber tape or paper tape. The post office does not accept packages taped with masking tape or thin cellophane tape.

Not all religious faiths celebrate traditional Christmas

By TERESA CURRY
Staff Writer

Around Thanksgiving, merchants begin putting up Christmas decorations in full force. For most people, this activity signals the beginning of the yuletide season — the celebration of the birth of Jesus, the Christian messiah.

The season is marked by caroling, gift-giving and feasting, and, although other faiths do not share the traditional Christian celebrations, many of their rituals parallel those of modern Christians.

Rabbi Frank Fischer of the Hillel Foundation on Cameron Avenue explained that Hanukkah is a season of gift-giving celebrated by Jews. This year, Hanukkah began at sundown Tuesday and runs through the night of Dec. 9.

"Hanukkah means dedication. It was the first holiday to commemorate a fight. About 168 B.C., a small group of Jewish soldiers led by Judah Maccabee fought off the Syrian Greeks," he said.

"The group of freedom fighters recaptured the temple and restored it. They found a vial of oil that lasted for eight days," Fischer said. He explained that candles are lit for eight days to commemorate the fight and the miracle of the oil.

During this occasion, Fischer added, the children spin dreidels, a kind of toy top, while the candles are burning. Latkes, which are like potato pancakes, are the festive food.

Ann Rosenwasser, president of the Hillel Foundation and a junior at the University, wanted to clarify that "Hanukkah has nothing to do with Christmas. People think Hanukkah is the Jewish

Christmas. It is really one of the lesser Jewish holidays in importance."

The Baha'i faith is another religious group, which like the Jewish faith, does not celebrate the traditional Christmas.

Arthur Zucker, resident of Chapel Hill who is of the Baha'i faith, explained "In our faith people come from many religions. We have no ministers. We are followers of the Baha'i or the glory."

Zucker explained the Baha'i observe Ayyam-i-Ha days that are similar to the Christian Christmas and involve rejoicing and gift-giving.

Fred Hall, a graduate student getting his doctorate in sociology and a Baha'i, said, "There are some Baha'is who can continue celebrating Christmas." He explained these are families who joined the church with children and who had already been celebrating Christmas.

For Hall Dec. 25 is a regular day. He explained that he and his wife sometimes visit friends and relatives who celebrate Christmas.

Gene Neal, a junior who attends the Brooks Avenue Church of Christ in Raleigh, said his church did not celebrate Christmas on Dec. 25 with a church service because one cannot pinpoint the date of Christ's birth.

"The Bible never mentions Dec. 25 as being the day of Christ's birth. We feel you should honor every Lord's day. We sing Christmas carols all year," Neal said.

"I do everything everybody else does on Dec. 25," Neal said. "I try not to confine giving just to Christmas day. I try to give all year round to the ones I love as well as others."