

KENNEL KAPERS — IN — KANGAROO LAND

Hello again:

Last week I hinted that we might be able to induce a good friend of ours to write an article on Christmas in Australia. Well, you won't have the pleasure because he chickened out. I don't know whether it was just because he refused to write under a heading like "Kennel Kapers In Kangaroo Land" or because he was just plain scared.

By the way, do we still write under a silly heading like that? It's truly a shame that such a real high class column like this is burdened with a J. Rascal McDaniel sounding

name like he gave this column.

I think our friend Richard felt bad about not writing the article. Last Saturday night he gave us a big going away party, and Sunday after church took us down to the beach for a picnic. This was his chance to make the big time, and he just calmly kicked his journalistic career down the drain.

Christmas is only a couple of weeks away here in Australia, and everyone down here is in the Christmas spirit. But Jean and I just haven't felt it yet, and I worry that Christmas day will be on top of us before the significance hits us.

We have had 98-degree weather this past week! I tell you the feeling is really wierd—besides being hot and humid. Jean and I are busily trying to put on our sun tans in order to look very healthy when we get back home.

Of course, the Australians take this "Christmas type" weather all in stride. The streets are gaily decorated even more so than at home. One store downtown has a 60-foot high Santa Claus standing in front of it, beckoning with his index finger to come in and buy from

them.

A few doors down the street another store has just the bust of Santa Claus about 30 feet high. All this one does is roll his eyes and open and close his mouth at you. Just about every store has something unique, but these two examples were the grandest in scale.

One of the largest stores has each window decorated with a different mechanical fairyland scene. The intricate movements and colorful lighting attract large crowds to watch these windows. I am not exaggerating when I say there are constantly about 30 or 40 people crowded around each of the windows all day long.

We are also struck by the comparative lack of Christ in Christmas—not that we at home don't

crowd Him out. Over here the term "Xmas" is used more than "Christmas" and we don't even find a few windows of the stores downtown decorated with Biblical scenes.

This general attitude might be expected from the fact that religion is not nearly so wide-spread down here as it is at home. People down here are amazed when they find out that 60 percent of our people belong to some church.

Christmas here is summer vacation time. Most school children get out of school for the end of the school year about December 10, and Christmas is a grand start on the school vacation. You can well imagine that children look forward to Christmas here even more than they do at home.

There is one aspect of Christmas here which I really don't appreciate. I have always thought of Christmas as "homecoming" time, when most families get together if even just once a year. Down here Christmas is a vacation time when hardly any family stays home on Christmas day. They usually go up

to the mountains or down to the beach, or just camp out.

Thus, you can see that we are missing Christmas this year in more ways than one. We'll just let out January 1 celebration with all of our folks in Los Angeles be a whopper.

Good people, I hate to say it, but next week's article will be our last. Don't wait with bated breaths.

Until next time, Cheerio!
Robbie

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