

THE BELLES

of Saint Mary's College



Volume XLVIII, No. 1

900 Hillsborough St.

Raleigh, N.C. 27603

December 1992

'Tis the Season to be Jolly...

The Yuletide season is associated with feasting, get-togethers, and having a jolly old time. The Medieval English *yol* and Icelandic *jol* referred to the midwinter feast going back to ancient days. The word *jolly* probably stems from them. So Yuletide means jolly feast or jolly time.

But how does decking the halls with boughs of holly come into it? (Not to mention the Yule tree.)

At least 4000 years ago, the Egyptians held a celebration in honor of the sun god during the time which corresponds to December in modern times. Their symbol? A palm tree, of course.

Moving on to ancient Rome, one finds the Romans holding the Saturnalia (7-day festival of Saturn) each year beginning December 17. Commerce ceased, everything shut down, and gifts were exchanged. In addition, the temples were decorated with greenery, especially holly because of its shiny green leaves and bright red berries. The Romans also hung masks of Bacchus on trees, which was supposed to impart fertility to those who gazed upon them.

Other groups of ancients celebrated the winter solstice, which comes around December 21. Their festivities often included green boughs, pine cones, and berries. The Teutons also brought trees from the forest into their homes. This was to show the godlike spirits they believed inhabited the trees that they were welcome at winter solstice celebrations.

Martin Luther (1483-1546) Protestant religious reformer, is credited by some with introducing lights on the Yule trees. Supposedly as he strolled one evening, he was entranced by the beauty of a starlit sky and snowflakes sparkling in the moonlight. Returning home, he attached lighted candles to the tree to represent the starry night.

Records show that Yule trees with lighted candles were the custom in the upper Rhineland since at least 1608. Homesick Hessian troops in the Colonies during the American Revolution brought the tree custom with them. In 1840, Prince Albert introduced the household tree into Britain, and President Franklin Pierce had the first Yule-

tide tree in the White House in 1856.

In the 20th century, with the disappearance of whole forests due to industrialization, slash-burn farming, and pollution, the tree's vital place in Earth's ecosystem is increasingly recognized. The ancients were right to honor trees. And in 1991, The White House used a living tree transplanted from New Mexico as the nation's official yule tree. The current trend seems to be toward "borrowing" a tree for Yuletide and then replanting the still living tree in the yard or donating it to a forest.

So deck your halls and your tree with plenty of lights and holly and jolly; let the tree's "god-like spirit" be honored; and then return it to the soil from whence it came. 'Tis the season.

King's Hope: P-E-A-C-E

On Christmas Eve, 1967, at the Auburn Avenue Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. gave a sermon about his hopes for peace in the world. He spoke of the interdependence of all humanity, of the sacredness of life, of the power of love and of social change through nonviolence.

His sermon has special significance today as the world faces the dawning of a new world order, as countries which were enemies during King's day now become friends, and newly-divided countries rekindle old hatreds. As he so eloquently stated 25 years ago, "Now the judgment of God is upon us, and we must either learn to live together as brothers, or we're all going to perish together as fools."

Working Miracles Every Day

The next time you pass a Salvation Army Christmas kettle, please remember that your donation will mean more services for the elderly, more Christmas dinners and toys for those in need, and more rent and utility assistance.



Everyone is ready for Christmas break!

Exams Stress Students

By Elizabeth Ash

Christmas vacation is the time that every Saint Mary's student looks forward to, but the week before the much-deserved vacation is exam week. As we all know, "Exam week is the most important part of the academic semester." Most exams count a fourth or a third of your final average for the course. Exams are not to be ignored, but they are also nothing to stress out about.

Some students at Saint Mary's were asked about their own horror experiences with exams. One Saint Mary's student replied,

"I forgot to set my alarm clock before I went to bed, so I did not wake up." Another student said, "My mind went blank when it came time to take the exam, but, fortunately, I remembered after a few minutes. Another Saint Mary's student said, "I had gone

out to celebrate the night before because I had just finished taking my most dreaded exam. I told myself that I would study when I got in, but I had celebrated a little too much." One student said "I was so stressed out because I had two important exams that I could not even sleep that night."

There are preparations that we can take so that the exams don't get the best of us. Be sure not to cram for the exams because that definitely causes stress. Just sit back, relax, and study. At least studying is not hard labor, if that is a comforting thought. Remember to set your alarm clock so that you won't miss the exam. To help relieve stress, eat a balanced diet (if that is even possible) and exercise. Also remember that exams do not prove to be fatal. Good luck!!

A special tradition continues

Lighting o' the Grove 1992

By Stephanie Dudley

Throughout the many years of Saint Mary's existence, several traditions have been created that continue, even to this day. As Christmas is slowly but surely creeping up on us, one of those traditions has survived the test of time. When this celebration began in December of 1981, it was called "The Lighting O' The Green". For this annual gathering of students and admirers, bright bulbs were wrapped around tall pine trees near the chapel, and gifts of food for the needy were

piled beneath the tree. The Granddaughters Club placed 492 luminaries, which are lighted candles glowing through paper bags, around the circle. Each member of the Saint Mary's student body had a luminary. The scene has been described as "breath-takingly beautiful from Hillsborough Street." All of this beauty is a gift to the community at Christmas time. Now this annual event is called "The Lighting O' The Grove" and is anticipated all year long not only for its beauty, but for its season's cheer.

Merry Christmas
and
Happy New Year