Yuletide traditions shift as economy puts pinch in family pocketbooks

Inflation Causes New Emphasis For Christmas

By Lillian Wiggins

"I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas" certainly won't be the only thing the American people will be dreaming about this year during and after the gay holiday season.

For many it will be a matter of survival. In many homes all over the country many American citizens may not be able to afford the luxury of letting themselves think of snow, Santa Claus and Christmas lights.

The economy and how they can survive the high cost of living will be first and foremost in their minds.

For the first time, perhaps in their lifetime, many Americans are beginning to feel the pinch; feel what it means to sacrifice and do without . . . in the land of plenty.

What does all of this mean at Christmas time for the young and old alike? Firstly that traditional Christmas dinner may not be so traditional after all.

Housewives are flustered and agitated because of re-pricing of shelf merchandise.

As a mother of three and homemaker, it is easy for me to understand the housewives dilemma because price stickers are stacked up

Typical holiday meal for small family will cost $51.88 or more

so high on the caps of certain items they seem to make a dome of escalated prices.

The original price had been stamped directly on the cap, and then new price labels are added, one on top of the other.

Turkey, ham, capons, ribs, pig feet, pork roast and chicken wings are twice as high in the market today as they were during the Yuletide season last year.

Vegetables, frozen and fresh, are costly to say nothing about canned goods. Last year applesauce, stringbeans, corn, pork and beans, fruit cocktail, stewed tomatoes and green peas sold six cans for $1.00.

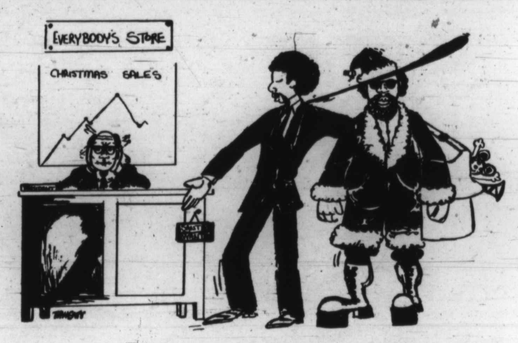
This year the shopper will be lucky to get three cans of the same items for $1.00.

And what about the fruit that always adorns the tables throughout the house? Out of sight. A trip to a fruit market (first weekend in November) yielded four apples at a cost of $1.50. Oranges (sold last year 12 for .79) now sell six for .79 and these are not the popular naval oranges.

Grapes, well people just aren't doing much buying. Lettuce and tomatoes, if caught on good days, can be worthwhile buys.

The price of a typical traditional Christmas dinner today, as calculated through supermarket purchases, went like this:

Turkey, 12 pounds, $14.40; small ham but, heavily coated with fat



THE PEOPLE'S SANTA.

and cut in half, $10.02; three pounds sweets, (for candied yams) $2.56; macaroni (small elbow) .57 . . purchased two boxes; cheese—two medium size pieces each $1.02; eggs, one dozen, .67 (small size); gallon milk $1.67; string beans, two family size frozen, .89 each; two heads of lettuce, .35 each; one package tomatoes, .59; 5 pound-bag sugar $2.76 (store brand) and two cans of Cranberry sauce, .45 each and bread for stuffing, three medium size loaves, $1.00.

For a traditional dinner of ham,turkey with stuffing and cranberry sauce; candied yams . . no marshmallows; macaroni and cheese, string beans and a tossed green salad, minus radishes and cucumbers; the cost for a family of five . . with no left overs, totalled $40.31.

To splurge a little add oranges, apples, tangerines, onions, pickels, cake mix and jello for dessert; ice tea, spices and flour for gravy and the bill increased $11.57, making a grand total of $51.88.

A housewife, also works as a sales clerk, wasn't surprised when quoted the approximate price for a traditional Christmas dinner.

She said, "I am having a tough time now just working and buying the food. I buy meats one week and staple goods the next.

"When rent time comes around, it's time to buy meats again . . when I get my gas and electric bills, it's time to buy staple goods again."

Explaining that she doesn't know when this vicious circle will end, this housewife put thumbs down on any outside Christmas decorations for her two-story house.

Citing the surcharge on electricity and the added amount now attached to the gas bills this housewife concluded by saying,'I don't think we will even have a tree, if I did. I don't know what I would put on it anyway."

Many American families, not hurting as much as lower income groups, have dubbed this holiday season "The Inflation Christmas."

Festive lights, decorations may be out in some places as cost rises

Yes, they will have their traditional Christmas dinner with all of the trimmings but not without griping.

Middle income housewives are definitely complaining about the price of sugar, beans, dried (many make their own baked beans from scratch); syrup and among other things, cars, clothes and the high cost of utilities.

One out of five, in middle income American homes, in the

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Holiday Hints

Fatigued feet, the Christmas shopper's lament takes its toll on the entire family. When Mrs. Santa Claus' feet ache she gets grouchy. A little pre-shopping planning can keep gift buying pleasurable right through the dinner hour.

Spend an at-home day preparing casserole dishes to freeze. Then on shopping days, select a meal to defrost, tear up salad makings and put them into a covered bowl, line up the go-withs for supper, and set the table before leaving.

This way, even if you are delayed and open the door to find a famished family, you can quickly get the meal on the table. If there are small children, leave a snack tray of carrots and celery to stave off fussing.

It also helps to bring a small gift, such as, a Christmas coloring book, to hold their attention until dinnertime.

Upon returning from shopping, pop the casserole into the oven and then use 15 minutes of the reheating time for a foot-bath.

Punch

(Continued from Page 2)

to bob in the cup. For the younger set's entertainment colorful fruits may be threaded gaily on a stirrer.

HOLIDAY PUNCH

1 envelope unsweetened soft drink mix, any red flavor
2 cups pineapple juice
¼ cup lemon juice
2 quarts water with ice cubes

Combine soft drink mix, fruit juices and water with ice cubes in a large pitcher or punch bowl. Stir until soft drink mix is dissolved. Serve in punch cups. If desired, alternate red and green cherries on skewers or wooden sticks; place one in each punch cup. Makes 2½ quarts or 20 servings.

Note: Unsweetened soft drink mix should be prepared in a plastic or glass container.

COLORFUL COOLER

3 envelopes unsweetened soft drink mix, any red flavor
1 cup sugar
3 quarts water with ice
1 can (46 oz.) pineapple, grapefruit, or other fruit juice
4 fully ripe bananas, mashed (optional)
1 bottle (28 fl. oz.) ginger ale or lemon-lime carbonated beverage, chilled

Dissolve instant soft drink mix and sugar in water with ice in a punch bowl. Add fruit juice and bananas. Stir or whip until frothy and well blended; add ginger ale. Garnish with orange slices or other fruit, if desired. Makes 5 to 5½ quarts or about 50 servings.

Note: Unsweetened soft drink mix should be prepared in a plastic or glass container.

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