



The symbol of Father Time is considerably older than the popular conception of Santa Claus. The Santa that we recognize today is of somewhat recent vintage when compared with Father Time, who is traced to Greek legend.

Father Time, complete with scythe and time worn brow, comes to us as a descendant of the Greek god Cronus, lord of universe. But, whereas Father Time is considered somewhat venerable, Cronus, like many of mythology's earthly gods, was not altogether an admirable fellow.

**Bad Habit**

According to legend, Cronus was warned that one of his children would dispose of him. To prevent such a happening, he developed a habit of swallowing them at birth. His wife, Rhea, upon the birth of their child, Zeus, hid the infant and presented Cronus with a stone wrapped in swaddling clothes.

Everything ended happily. Cronus disgorged the stone as well as the previous children he had swallowed. Zeus later, as prophesized, dethroned his father and settled on Mount Olympus where he ruled as chief god of the Greek pantheon.

**Symbol Emerges**

Through the years, Cronus' name became confused with the word 'cronos' which means time. Eventually, someone placed an hour glass in his empty hand and, together with the scythe, the popular image of Father Time was presented to the world.

The New Year Babe is not quite so easy to date, although it is known that a baby was paraded as a symbol of rebirth during the ancient Greek festival of Dionysus, which would make the Babe symbol almost as old as that of Father Time. A chief ceremony in the Eleusinian Mysteries also featured the image of a child.

More recently, a 14th century German folk song depicts the New Year Babe as we know it today—the symbol of a fresh, New Year.

**Wrapping Hints**

Do you have trouble gift-wrapping such items as vases and bottles? If so, aluminum foil will solve your problem. The foil molds easily to the shape and makes a very attractive package when set off with a pretty bow.



By Shirley Sargent

"Christmas isn't everyday." Happily, Eudora Best placed divinity and fudge on gift plates in the roomy, old-fashioned kitchen. Robert had his mother's big, brown eyes and dark hair, but none of her relaxed good humor. "Mother, you've always been so understanding. Why can't you let me go on the Culligan houseparty with Mary? They'll be skiing, Mom, and ice skating."

"I don't care if they have a winter carnival in the living room of their lodge," Eudora tied sprigs of mistletoe to her bows for the candy. "You're not going."

"Aw, Mom," Robert's rough naked voice betrayed his youth even though he looked every muscular inch of a man. "I'll stay home tonight, Christmas Eve, and drive up afterwards. Don't forget Mary's father is dead so she and her mother need someone around on Christmas day and you have the three kids, Dad, Grandma and ninety-eleven turkey eating relatives."

**The Meaning**

"And you!" Eudora began gift-wrapping jars of marmalade. "Christmas celebrates the birth of Christ and, to me, a renewal of family ties and traditions."

Robert made one last effort. "But, Mom, I'm almost twenty. I'll be off on my own soon and you mean I'm to drop everything and come tearing home for Christmas until I have a family of my own?"

"I certainly do. Meanwhile, I expect you to observe and enjoy such curious family customs as finding your brothers and sister so you can distribute this candy around the neighborhood."

"I have to call Mary first and tell her the bad news."

**Uneasy**

Gracelessly, Robert aided his brothers, John and Ted, seventeen and eleven to shop for gifts. John, whose current girl lived in town, told him to stop acting like a sorehead, but that was the only obvious notice taken of Robert's



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listless participation in the family rituals. He helped John bring in armfuls of wood for a roaring fire, his father rig up a loud-speaker system so that carol records could be heard inside and outside the house, and redid the grimy packages his sister, Francie, had tried to wrap. He did all of this quietly and, the thought, patiently.

**A question**

His mother didn't think so. She stopped him as he stalked through the kitchen that evening. "I know you think I'm unfair, I know you wanted to go with the Culligans, but do you have to spoil things for the rest of us?"

Robert tramped gloomily up the stairs and found his sister huddled on top of them. Francie was a gawky twelve with braces on her teeth, but had a promising prettiness. Not right then, though, as she was crying softly. Robert had a horror of tears, so he asked impatiently, "What's wrong?"

"Everything. I hate Christmas." Robert's voice showed his shock.

"Don't be silly! Of course you don't."

"I do too. Mother won't let me go caroling in the truck with everybody else because I'm too

**Counting Time Man's Problem For Centuries**

Time is, as no one can deny, very valuable, so it is not surprising man learned how to count it accurately, down to the minute, even to the second. But man is not yet, the complete master of time.

The Gregorian Calendar, presented to the world in 1582, brought about the first achievement of any unity on the world time front. But, it took a long time to catch on. England didn't adopt

young and there's nobody to be responsible for me."

"Is that all?" Her problem seemed insignificant beside his own, but solvable. "Come on." He argued his mother into letting Francie go with him and she didn't capitulate easily.

The truck was jammed with enthusiastic, off-tune carolers, the air was crisp and Robert soon joined in wholeheartedly and throatily. When they arrived home, he raced into the kitchen, grabbed a handful of mincemeat cookies, grinned at his mother's agonized yell and realized exultantly that, Mary or no Mary, Christmas was made up of such heart-warming rituals as Francie's shining eyes, cookies and caroling.

the Gregorian system until 1752, after most other European countries had done so.

**Egyptians**

The ancient Egyptians devised a fairly accurate calendar, similar to the Gregorian in that it was divided into 12 periods and consisted of 365 days. The difference between the Egyptian method and our present time counting system, however, was that the 12 periods used in Egypt consisted of 30 days each, with the remaining five days of the year 'tacked on' to the last period, or month, without any provision for leap years.

The purpose of our Leap Years, then, is not to give every girl the chance to catch herself a man. Instead, Leap Years help us keep the calendar and the solar equinoxes congruent. An adjustment is necessary because of the fact that the solar year consists of 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes and 46 seconds. Without Leap Years, we would have to do something with the extra hours.

**How To Tell**

How are Leap Years determined? Years divisible by four are Leap Years—except the years numbering the centuries. They are Leap Years only if divisible by four after the ciphers have been removed.

The use of this system guarantees the accuracy of the Gregorian calendar until 2500 A.D. Perhaps before that time arrives, someone will come up with the 'perfect' method of marking time forever.



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