

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR:

Greetings Thomas family members!



As always, I hope this letter finds you both happy and healthy.

First of all, I'd like to say thank you to everyone for your positive comments and encouragement to continue with this family project. It was a pleasure to hear that you agreed it was a good idea. I hope that I will continue to receive your comments and suggestions, as well as an update on what's going on in your lives.

Putting together Volume Two of this newsletter was a great deal of fun for me mainly because it covers the holiday season, but also because there was so much good news to write about. I had actually gathered so much information for this edition that I had to, unfortunately, start deleting articles and saving some for the next issue. (Even so, I ended up with a longer issue than I had intended.) I hope that you will find what I have included interesting as well as informative. I also hope that everyone will appreciate the message from our eldest family member, Mother Emma Thomas, as much as I did (printed on the back cover). It was particularly pleasing to me that she so quickly acknowledged the value of this new "mouth piece" and is using it to reach her family. We will certainly benefit from her years of experience and wisdom.

Again, I encourage everyone to let me know what special things are going on in your lives. What may seem like a small accomplishment, not really worth mentioning, to you, may be a true inspiration to someone else. Being mentioned in or making a contribution to this newsletter is not meant to brag or boast about anyone, it simply helps our family members to remain "connected", which is the sole purpose for this project.

In closing, I'd like to ask that everyone remember, in some form or fashion, the ancestors of the Thomas family during this holiday season. I truly believe that they are our "guardian angels" and should never be forgotten, for we are as "connected" to the spirits of our ancestors as we are to the living. When we sit down to Thanksgiving dinner, let's remember to give thanks for them and include their names in our daily prayers.

Again, thank you for your support in this endeavor. Until next time, happy holidays and may God continue to bless you!

Donna



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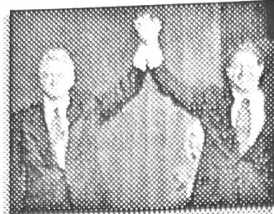
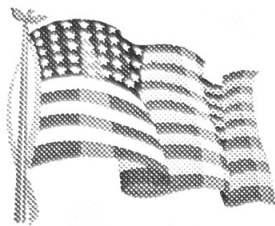
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"In America, anyone can become president. That's the risk you take."

Adlai Stevenson

CONGRATS TO THE DEMOCRATS!



Clinton and Gore celebrate. (AP)

Well, it looks as though everything is over but the uncertainty. So, let's concentrate first on what is certain. President Clinton became the first Democrat since Franklin D. Roosevelt to win reelection to the White House. Indeed, in spite of public doubt about his integrity, Clinton actually improved on his share of the popular vote over four years ago and ended with approximately 55 percent to claim a clear mandate for his second term. Dole, making his fourth campaign for national office but his first as the Republican Party's presidential nominee, found little support for his campaign of tax cuts and attacks on Clinton's integrity and received about 45 percent of the vote. Reform Party nominee, Ross Perot, whose protest campaign four years ago drew 19 percent of the vote and helped influence the agenda in Washington afterward, was received less than half of that this time around. Perot appeared to be hurt both by the growing optimism in the country and public weariness with his candidacy.

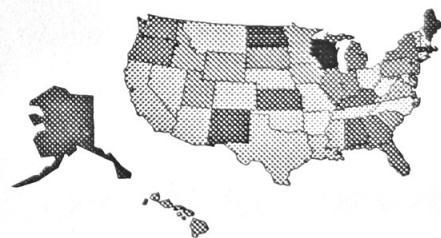
Tens of thousands of people stood on the streets of downtown Little Rock watching giant outdoor screens, whooping and high-fiving as the networks declared Clinton's victory. Clinton appeared outside the Old Statehouse in Little Rock around midnight to claim his victory and thank his supporters, joined by Vice President Al Gore.

President Clinton benefited from what was apparently the largest gender gap in the nation's history, splitting the vote of men with Bob Dole while crushing his opponent among women. The net

result was a record 17-point difference between the presidential voting patterns of the two sexes. Clinton's success at attracting the votes of women marked a substantial shift from 1992, when his strategy was to play down the gender gap and try to win as many votes from men, particularly white men, as possible. In 1992, Clinton won among men 42 percent to 38 percent, and among women 45 percent to 37 percent, producing one of the smallest gender gaps in recent years. This time, Clinton set out to claim the female vote, emphasizing issues women favor more strongly than men, including the V-chip that screens out objectionable television programming, the assault weapons ban, the Violence Against Women Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act and tough enforcement of child support laws against deadbeat dads. That changed strategy produced losing ratios among male voters for Clinton, while winning him overwhelming approval among women. Working women voted for Clinton 56 percent to 35 percent for Dole.



(continued on page 14)



Congratulations to "Mother" Emma Thomas who participated in this year's election process, although she admits to not voting since she was 18 years old. This year she registered to vote and decided that, although she has a very pessimistic view of politics, it is important that all African American citizens take advantage of a privilege which they have more than earned. I hope that her participation will be an inspiration to all Thomas family members.

HALLOWEEN PARTY

It happened on Saturday, October 26, 1996 at the home of Wilbert and Carolyn Cross in Potomac, MD. What a BASH! We did the Monster MASH — or was that the macarena? the electric slide? Oh well, nevertheless, it was a Graveyard SMASH — in other words, a party to DIE for!! And wasn't there enough ugliness to go around? Have Mercy!! Thank goodness some folks had the decency to wear masks (Ha-Ha! Just Joking.) We spent all night and half the morning eating good food, dancing to some soul music, and laughing at one another. Sounds like a good way to keep the family together to me (especially when it's such a *strange* family!)

In attendance were goblins, witches, spooks (and I do mean spooks!), and some other unidentifiable creatures. Some of the guests truly outdid themselves with their costumes; a few worth mentioning were: *Seymour Thomas, III* was a very handsome, yet soulful, Blacula and *Carmen Thomas* was a scary, although short-lived, Frankenstein. *Tanya Moxley* had to be the smallest but cutest pumpkin with mouse ears that we've ever seen and *Laurie Ambush* left her Hawaiian island long enough to stop by and shake her grass skirt to liven up the party a bit. *Michael Moxley* sported a mask that could make you lose your lunch and *Barbara Ambush*.....well, we're not quite sure if she was a peacock, but she certainly had a mean strut and shook her tail feathers all night long. *Angela Ambush* made her entrance as one of the prettiest witches that ever flew through the night and *Darren Thomas* was be-dazzling in a dark double-breasted suit as he



mocked the rich and famous. *Wilbert Cross* reminded us of "Old Peg Leg Pete" as he "pirated" around the house with his eye patch on. Now *George Thomas* was.....well....*George Thomas* was.....well his mask was definitely ugly and you couldn't miss him in this huge red hat. But the funniest and sexiest costume was worn by our hostess, *Carolyn Cross*, who learned a humorous lesson about clothing labeled "One Size Fits All." Unfortunately for her, her one size didn't quite fit all, but watching her pull and tug all evening was hilariously priceless for everyone in attendance. Those lucky enough to catch it on film will be able to look back and laugh for years to come.



But the real sport of the evening was our *Mother Dearest*. She truly walked away with the prize for the most creative costume. None of her family could recognize her mingling through the crowd as a little old man who said he "was just out try-

ing to have a good time." No one expected to see our oldest family member all decked out in a man's suit with long white hair and a beard to match!! But there she was.....yes, it was, as they say, a sight for sore eyes.

Indeed, the vote is unanimous that a great time was had by all and we thank everyone for their participation (especially those who donated a dish). But we sincerely want to thank Carolyn and Wilbert for offering their home for one night so that people could laugh and forget their troubles. It seems that everywhere you turn there's someone complaining about one thing or another, but it's nice to get together, if only for a short time, to simply enjoy and appreciate that special moment in time. (By the way, did anyone see which way that pregnant bunny went?????)



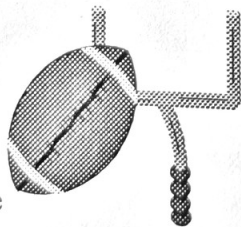
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PEE WEE DIVISION FOOTBALL



Was it a bird? A plane? Superman? No, actually it was our little *Antoine Ambush* zooming across the field on yet another early Saturday morning to help lead the Firebirds to another team victory. Proudly wearing jersey no. 60 in his black and burgundy uniform, Antoine gives this game his all as he plays offensive lineman for this challenging sport. Although this is Antoine's first year and he's still learning, he has proven that he won't give up when the going gets rough. That's the spirit Antoine!!

Seriously, we are very proud that Antoine is out there learning valuable team lessons along with having some fun. We must also commend the Montgomery County Recreational Dept. for continuing to sponsor athletic opportunities such as these that give our children in the community a chance to get a head start on acquiring some of the invaluable personal traits/characteristics that will be needed to participate as part of any team. The lessons these children learn as part of the league will continue to play a role in their lives as they grow older.



Unfortunately by the time you receive this newsletter, Antoine will have only one game left to play on Saturday, November 16 at 9:00 a.m. at St. Peters High School in Olney, MD. But we want to thank all those who made an effort in seeing that Antoine could benefit from this program and especially those who came out to support him. We encourage you to come out and make his last game a memorable one.

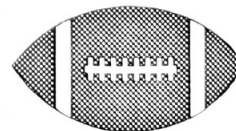
COACHING AT RICHARD MONTGOMERY



While Antoine Ambush aggressively runs the ball down the field, *Brian Thomas* aggressively coaches the sport he, himself, once played. While the two are definitely enjoying the sport of football in different ways, the commitment and determination to do their best is shared by both. In Brian's capacity as Assistant Coach at Richard Montgomery High School, he, too, must know how to celebrate success and learn from defeat. Brian must always realize that he has to do what is best for the team and not just for any certain individuals. As coach, he teaches his players not to "grandstand", but attempt to win the game in a manner in which everyone will be proud. As we watch many sports lose their popularity due to inappropriate behavior by both coaches and players, we must applaud Brian for pursuing higher principles as he influences the character building of his team.

The devoted fans of the sport, who commit both time and money, want to see a competitive game played with fairness and decency regardless of the outcome. In that regard, Richard Montgomery will definitely benefit from Brian's upbringing in the Thomas family.

Unfortunately, by the time you receive this issue, Brian, too, will only have one game left of the season, but hopefully some of us will get to be there. His last game will take place at **Richard Montgomery High School on Friday, Nov. 8, at 7:00 P.M.** against Bethesda Chevy Chase. Brian can use all the support he can get for this last home game. It's always nice when the last game is a victory!



"The only place where success comes before work is in a dictionary."

Vidal Sassoon

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THE THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY



DID YOU KNOW that Thanksgiving in the United States was originally a harvest festival, one of the oldest and most widespread of celebrations? The American holiday commemorates a harvest celebration held by the Pilgrims of Plymouth colony in 1621.

The Pilgrims had come ashore from the Mayflower on December 21, 1620. The winter had been heartbreaking. Only about half the original group had survived. Fortunately (thanks to the Indians), the harvest was good. There were 20 acres of the strange Indian corn, for which the the Indians had furnished seeds. There were also barley and plenty of meat. Governor William Bradford sent men to hunt for fowl. They returned with enough waterfowl and wild turkeys to last a week. Fishermen brought in cod and bass. Indian hunters contributed five deer. Ninety Indians, with their chief, Massasoit, feasted with the colonists for three days. (For purposes of this article we won't discuss how these people later managed to forget about the hospitality and friendship of the Indians, on whose land they had come ashore.)

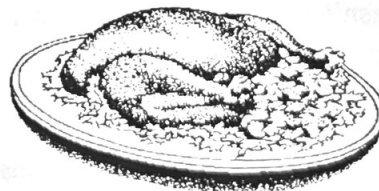
The date of the feast is not known. Governor Bradford wrote that on September 18 some men when to Massachusetts Bay to trade with the Indians. The harvest was gathered after they returned. The feast must have occurred before December 11. It was described in a letter written on that date by Edward Winslow.

There is also no record that the feast was called a "thanksgiving." Appointing certain days to give special thanks was a custom of the Puritans, but the first record of such a day was two years later in 1623. Then the Pilgrims "set apart a day of thanksgiving" for rain that ended a terrible

drought. Thanksgiving days following harvests later came to be celebrated throughout the New England Colonies but on different and varying dates.

Sarah Josepha Hale believed that Thanksgiving should be a national patriotic holiday. She began her campaign in 1846. Year after year she wrote editorials and sent letters to the president, to state governors, and to other influential persons. For the date she chose the last Thursday in November because on the last Thursday of that month in 1789 (Nov. 26) George Washington had proclaimed a National Thanksgiving Day in honor of the new United States Constitution. Finally, Sarah Hale won the support of President Abraham Lincoln. On Oct. 3, 1863, during the Civil War, Lincoln proclaimed a national day of Thanksgiving to be celebrated on Thursday, November 26. He also named the last Thursday in November as the day to be observed every year.

Lincoln and every president who followed him proclaimed the holiday each year. The date chosen, with few exceptions, was the last Thursday in November. President Franklin D. Roosevelt thought Thanksgiving fell too close to Christmas. In 1939, he proclaimed the third Thursday Thanksgiving Day. Not all states complied, however. In December 1941 a joint resolution of Congress specified the fourth Thursday in November as Thanksgiving Day.



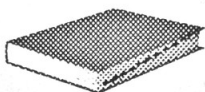
On this year's Thanksgiving Day, what will YOU be thankful for??? *It is our sincere hope that, amongst many other things, you will be thankful for the Thomas family and the love we share for one another. When you thank the Lord for your bountiful Thanksgiving dinner, include a thank you for the blessings bestowed upon your family.*

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THE READING CORNER

This month's featured book is a title which remained on the *New York Times* bestseller list for quite some time after its publication in 1993. The book we highly recommend as worthwhile reading for the family this month is **Having Our Say**, written by Sarah L. and A. Elizabeth Delany with Amy Hill Hearth. Reprinted below is the preface to the book, written by Amy Hearth, to give you some idea of how and why the book was written and what it is about.



Title: **Having Our Say**
 Authors: Sarah L. & A. Elizabeth Delany with Amy Hill Hearth
 Price: \$6.50 (sold only in paperback)

Preface:

When I met Sadie Delany and her sister, Bessie, in September 1991, I was on assignment for the *New York Times*, hoping to write a story on these two elderly but reclusive sisters who had just celebrated their one-hundred-and-second and one-hundredth birthdays. In my hand I carried a letter written by their neighbor in Mount Vernon, New York, who had extended an invitation to come by and meet them. The Delany sisters had no phone, so I wasn't entirely sure they knew I was coming. I was prepared to be turned away.

I knocked on the door. I waited and raised my hand to knock again, when suddenly the door swung open. The woman who answered, with her head held high, her eyes intense and penetrating, extended her hand in formal greeting. "I am Dr. Delany," she said elegantly.

She ushered me into the house, and from across the room, another elderly woman said sweetly, "Please come in, child. Won't you sit down?" This was the elder sister, Sadie Delany.

I must have hesitated for a moment. "Go on, sit down," Bessie urged. "Sit down as long as you

like. We won't charge you rent!" Then they both laughed uproariously at this little joke.

Over the next three hours, I was charmed by their vivaciousness and playfulness. They seemed to have conquered old age, or to have come as close to it as anyone ever will. It was clear that they had found the source of their vitality in each other's company, and in the tales they told and retold each other from a century of living.

When my piece was published, the reaction was swift. Readers fell in love with the Delany sisters. There were letters from all over the country, demands for television interviews, requests for guest appearances at schools and at political functions. The sisters declined nearly all of the invitations.

Among those who read my article were editors at Kodansha America, Inc., who felt that the Delanys' story deserved to be a book. At first the sisters demurred, unsure that their life stories were sufficiently interesting or significant. But they came to see that by recording their story, they were participating in a tradition as old as time; the passing of knowledge and experience from one generation to the next.

The daughters of a man born into slavery and a mother of mixed racial parentage who was born free, the sisters recall what it meant to be "colored" children in the late nineteenth century in the South. Their early lives were sheltered: They grew up on a college campus, Saint Augustine's School in Raleigh, North Carolina, where their father was an Episcopal priest and vice principal. Despite their privileged status, they suffered the insult of Jim Crow when it first became law.

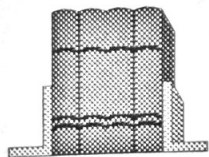
After years of teaching in the rural South to raise money, the Delany sisters joined the great wave of black Americans who headed north in search of opportunity during the early part of this century. Bessie became only the second black woman licensed to practice dentistry in New York, and Sadie was the first black person ever to teach domestic science on the high school level in New York City public schools.

The sisters lived in Harlem, and were acquainted with such legendary figures such as the states-

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man and poet James Weldon Johnson and the entertainer Cab Calloway. During an era when hearth and home defined the place of women, the Delany sisters spurned marriage opportunities for careers. In the 1950s they were in the vanguard of middle-class black Americans who integrated the suburbs and faced a new and difficult set of challenges. Already elderly in the 1960s, they cheered from the sidelines as the civil rights movement flourished, praying and worrying about younger relatives who were getting caught up in the protests.

Each sister developed her own way of coping with a racist society. Sadie expertly "played dumb" and manipulated the system, and Bessie believed in confrontation, regardless of the cost. This difference in personal styles has brought balance—and occasionally fireworks—to their hundred-year companionship. "We are living proof that you don't change one bit from cradle to grave," Bessie likes to say.



This book is woven from thousands of anecdotes that I coaxed from the Delany sisters during an eighteen-month period. The sequence of stories is mine but the words are all theirs. At times the sisters' versions of particular events were almost identical or told in a joint fashion—with one sister beginning a sentence, and the other finishing it—and so some chapters bear both of their names. In the others, either Sadie or Bessie chronicles their life together, each with her own distinct spin, voice, and viewpoint. Their story, as the Delany sisters like to say, is not meant as "black" or "women's" history, but American history. It belongs to all of us.

THE KWANZAA HOLIDAY



Although it is estimated that over 13 million Americans observe Kwanzaa, confusion still surrounds this most unusual holiday. The confusion primarily stems from the true nature of the holiday's origin. To help us better understand this important African American holiday, we have reprinted portions of a book entitled "Kwanzaa, Everything You Always Wanted To Know But Didn't Know Where To Ask", written by Cedric McClester. This book also includes Afrocentric food recipes and hair-styles, fashion and home decorating suggestions, and gifts for Kwanzaa. One should be able to obtain a copy of this book for about \$5.

Most commonly asked questions about Kwanzaa:

Question: What is Kwanzaa?

Answer: Kwanzaa is a unique American Holiday that pays tribute to the rich cultural roots of Americans of African ancestry.

Q. What is the meaning of the word Kwanzaa?

A. Kwanzaa means "the first" or "the first fruits of the harvest", in the East African language of Kiswahili.

Q. When is Kwanzaa observed?

A. Kwanzaa is observed from December 26th through January 1st.

Q. What is the origin of Kwanzaa?

A. Kwanzaa was founded in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga, a Black Studies professor who describes himself as a cultural nationalist. Kwanzaa originated as a cultural idea and an expression of the nationalist Us organization which was headed by Dr. Karenga.

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Q. Is Kwanzaa a religious holiday?

A. Kwanzaa is unique in that it is neither a religious, political, nor heroic holiday, but rather a cultural one.



Q. What is Kwanzaa based on?

A. Kwanzaa is based on seven fundamental principles which are referred to as the Nguzo Saba.

Q. What are those principles?

A. Unity, Umoja(U-mo-ja); Self-determination, Kujichagulia(Ku-ji-cha-gu-lia); Collective work and responsibility, Ujima(U-ji-ma); Cooperative economics, Ujamaa(U-ja-ma); Purpose, Nia; Creativity, Kuumba(Ku-um-ba); and faith, Imani(I-mani).

Q. Is Kwanzaa a Christmas substitute?

A. No. Although Dr. Karenga recognized the undue hardship that the overcommercialization of Christmas has for Black people and others who are at the lowest rung of the social strata. Therefore, those who find Kwanzaa to be more meaningful to them, now have an option and can still be part of the holiday season.



Q. How important is gift giving during Kwanzaa?

A. Gifts may be exchanged during Kwanzaa though it is suggested that they not be given if they present undue hardship. When gifts are given, it is suggested that they be creative i.e. handmade or functional like a book.

Q. How is Kwanzaa celebrated?

A. Kwanzaa can be celebrated in a number of ways. At a bare minimum a table should be prepared with the following items: A place mat (Mkeka) usually made of straw; a candle holder for seven candles (Kinara); seven candles (Mishumaa saba); a variety of fruit (Mazao); ears of corn (Vibunzi) representing the number of children in the home; gifts if any (Zawadi); and a unity or communal cup (Kikombe cha umoja) for pouring and sharing libation. Each day of Kwanzaa a



candle should be lit beginning with the black candle which is placed in the center of the candle holder. Candles are then lit alternately from left to right.

Three green candles should be placed on the left and three red candles should be placed on the right. Each day a principle should be recited when the candle is lit. The importance that each principle has for the person reciting it should be expounded on.



Q. Why is Kiswahili used?

A. Kiswahili was chosen because it is a non-tribal African language that encompasses a large portion of the African continent. An added benefit is that Swahili pronunciation is extremely easy. Vowels are pronounced like those in Spanish and the consonants, with few exceptions, like those of English. The vowels are as follows: A=ah as in father; E=a as in day; I=ee as in free; O=oo as in too. The accent is almost always on the next to the last syllable.

Listed below are The Seven Principles of Kwanzaa, which may serve as guides for daily living.

1. Umoja (Unity)

To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation and race.

2. Kujichagulia (Self-determination)

To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves and speak for ourselves instead of being defined, named, created for and spoken for by others.

3. Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility)

To build and maintain our community together and make our sister's and brother's problems our problems and to solve them together.

4. Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics)

To build and maintain our own stores, shops and

other businesses and to profit from them together.

5. Nia (Purpose)

To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.

6. Kuumba (Creativity)

To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.

7. Imani (Faith)

To believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

Dr. Maulana Karenga
7 September 1965



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY WISHES GO OUT
TO:**

**Little Raja Thomas who turned 3
years old on November 4.**



**Angela Ambush whose birthday
will take place on November 21.
YOU GO GIRL!!**

**Barbara Ambush whose birthday
will take place on December 11.**

**Cathy Thomas whose birthday will
take place on December 20.**



**Brian Thomas whose birthday
will take place on December 25.**

BACK TO SCHOOL ??

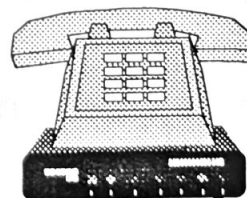


School is not just for the young in age; it is also for the young at heart. We can learn alot from *Seymour Thomas, III* (better known as "Junior") about perserverance and doing what needs to be done to continue striving for what you want and how to hold on to what you have. Junior has learned to enjoy and see the value in the necessary evil of returning to school after raising his family. Rather than sit around and complain or reminisce about the good old days when a knowledge of computers, foreign languages, etc. wasn't needed to get your job done, he instead has chosen to take steps to stay in line with today's technology and tomorrow's challenges by returning to the classroom.

So far, he has taken courses in computer software, accounting, Spanish, etc. and is currently enrolled in an English course. Believe it or not, he thinks its fun. He has figured out how to include study time into an already busy schedule and still have time to take a vacation, or take a ride on his recently acquired motorcycle. We are just as proud of Junior as we are of all the other younger Thomas children who are attending classes every day.



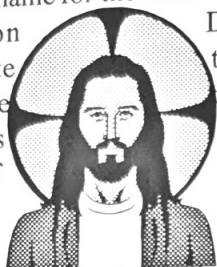
So, if you think you can make the time and have the inclination to return to the classroom, don't be afraid. You can't go wrong when you choose to continue learning, regardless of your current status in life. But if you should need a little encouragement or some advise on getting started, give the "Big Junior" a call. Because he will never forget the lessons taught by his parents, Seymour, Jr. and Emma, that you must share your blessings in order to continue in God's grace and mercy, we are sure he will make time to counsel someone looking for sound advise.



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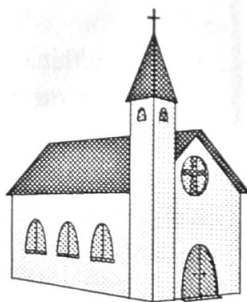
THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY

The word Christmas comes from the Old English term *Cristes maesse*, meaning "Christ's mass." This was the name for the festival service of worship held on December 25 to commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ. While it is accepted that Jesus was born in the small town of Bethlehem a few miles south of Jerusalem, there is no certain information on the date of his birth, not even the year. One reason for this uncertainty is that the stories of his birth, recorded in the New Testament books of Matthew and Luke, were written several decades after the event. And those who wrote of it gave no specific dates for the event.

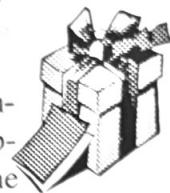


For several centuries the Christian church itself paid little attention to the celebration of Jesus' birth. The major Christian festival was Easter, the day of his resurrection. Only gradually, as the church developed a calendar to commemorate the major events of life of Christ, did it celebrate his birth.

Because there was no knowledge about the date of Jesus' birth, a day had to be selected. The Eastern Orthodox and the Eastern Rite churches within the Roman Catholic church chose January 6. The day was named Epiphany, meaning "appearance," the day of Christ's manifestation. The Western church, based at Rome, chose December 25. It is known from a notice in an ancient Roman almanac that Christmas was celebrated on December 25 in Rome as early as AD 336.

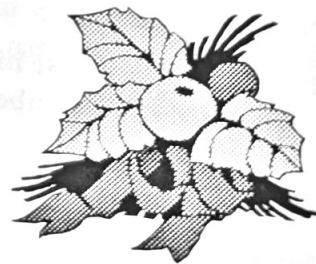


In the latter half of the 4th century, the Eastern and Western churches adopted each other's festival, thus establishing the modern Christian 12-day celebration from Christmas to Epiphany. In some places the 12th day is called the festival of the three kings because it is believed that the three wise men, or magi, visited the baby Jesus on that day, bringing him gifts.



Over the centuries a significant number of customs and traditional observances have emerged to make the Christmas season one of the most colorful and festive times of the year. Probably the most universal custom is gift giving, frequently associated with the person of Santa Claus. Other customs have to do with decoration—evergreen trees, lights, wreaths, and holly; the sending of cards; good and plentiful food and drink; and the singing of carols and other songs.

Although Christmas in America has become almost synonymous with gift-giving, it is our sincere hope that the Thomas family will not stress themselves over what they cannot afford. Let us teach our children to give more of themselves in acts of kindness to others rather than defining this special holiday by the damage done to credit cards. Let us remember the sick and shut-ins that may be relatives or neighbors. Let us appreciate the home-baked or hand-made gifts from the heart. Let us be thankful for our own good health and the ability to still help someone else along the way. Let's bring the spirituality back to the holiday!!!



MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL!

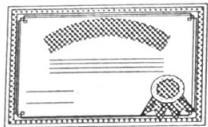
THE THOMAS TRIBUNE

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY WISHES GO OUT TO:

Tanya & Michael Moxley who celebrated their 3rd year of marriage on **October 2, 1996.**



Gerald & Joyce Thomas who celebrated their 8th year of marriage on **October 16, 1996.**



Carolyn & Wilbert Cross who will celebrate their 4th year of marriage on **November 27, 1996.**

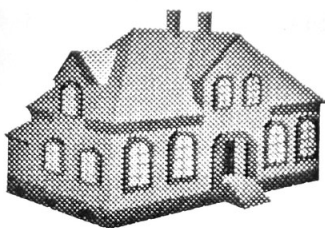


Carmen & George Thomas who will celebrate their 2nd year of marriage on **November 26, 1996.**

"What God has joined together, let no man put asunder."



**CONGRATULATIONS GO OUT TO
KEITH AND JOANNE THOMAS ON
THE PURCHASE OF THEIR BEAUTIFUL
HOME AT 13504 GULLIVERS TRAIL IN
BOWIE, MARYLAND.**



HOME IMPROVEMENTS



They say the "American Dream" is to be a homeowner. Well, what happens once you've accomplished that goal? According to the homeowners, you work your butt off to maintain it! But don't be discouraged, the hard work pays off in the security and enjoyment a "real home" can provide. So, we would like to take a moment to recognize and congratulate those family members who have recently been engrossed in keeping their homesteads (which are their biggest investments) in "tip-top" shape.

Joyce Christian's home has recently undergone a major facelift which included the addition of central air-conditioning, new carpet throughout, a brand new kitchen floor and appliances. *Barbara Ambush* has had a new roof and siding put on, bathrooms remodeled, and will soon enjoy new kitchen appliances and cabinets, and new upstairs carpeting. *Keith Thomas* has wasted no time in adding to the value of his new home in Bowie, Md. by having a new stone wall constructed that will definitely enhance the beauty of his front entrance. *Seymour Thomas, III* has, in addition to his classes, been using every available fair-weather day to paint his home and get it ready for the harsh winter months that are just around the corner.



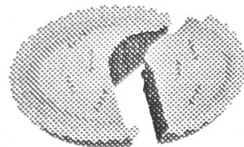
Indeed, being a homeowner is not always easy or inexpensive. But the Thomas family shares many warm memories of social events which have taken place in the homes of the people mentioned above, and we are thankful that they continue to maintain their homes in a manner that we all feel, not only comfortable, but **proud** of their accomplishments. To them we say, keep up the good work!!

"What you will do matters. All you need is to do it."
Judy Grahn

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HOLIDAY RECIPES

Listed below are three (3) popular recipes which are holiday favorites. Hopefully, you will get to try at least one during each of the upcoming holidays. (We're not going to count calories and fat content in these because calories and fat don't count during the holidays; it's a rule that was established a long time ago.) Ha-Ha! Happy Eating!



Sweet Potato Pie

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 4 medium yams | 1 tbsp. nutmeg or cinnamon |
| 1 cup sugar | |
| 1/2 stick of butter | 1/4 tsp. vanilla |
| 1/4 tsp. salt | 3 eggs, separated |
| 1/2 cup coconut | 1/3 cup milk |
| 1 tbsp. lemon flavor | 1 unbaked 9" pie crust |

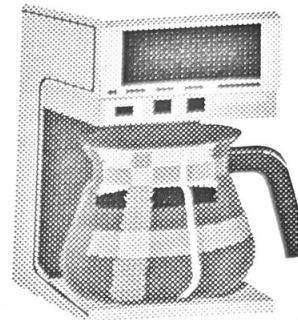
Boil yams - well done. Peel and mash. Mix in large bowl yams, sugar, butter and salt. Beat well. Add milk, lemon flavor, coconut, nutmeg and egg yolks. Continue beating. Beat egg whites until fluffy. Fold into mixture. Pour into pie crust shell (1-9" deep pie plate). Bake in 350° oven 35-45 minutes.

Kwanzaa Fried Chicken

- 1 whole fryer cut into parts
- 1/4 cup of hot sauce
- 1 tbsp. of mustard
- 1 cup of flour
- 1 tbsp. of cornmeal
- 1/4 cup Italian bread crumbs
- 2 tbsp. of Bisquick
- 1 tsp. of baking powder

Pour hot sauce and mustard in bowl. Rub chicken thoroughly in bowl and let stand for 10 minutes. Place flour, cornmeal, bread crumbs, bisquick, & baking powder in plastic bag. Salt and pepper to taste. Drop chicken in bag and shake well. Pre-

heat iron skillet. Pour 1/2 pan of oil until hot, drop chicken in oil. Do not crowd. Cook on med. high flame until light brown on one side. Lower flame and cover until almost crispy brown. Remove cover and let cook 3 more minutes before turning over and turning flame back up. Cook until crispy brown. Drain and lay on paper towels. Serves 4 people.



Hawaiian Chocolate Chip Cookies

- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup butter or margarine, softened
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup flaked coconut
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- 3/4 cup coarsely chopped macadamia nuts

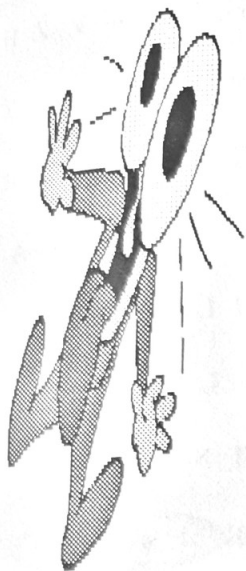
Heat oven to 375°F. In large mixing bowl, combine sugars, butter, egg and vanilla. Beat at med. speed of electric mixer until light and fluffy. Add flour, coconut, baking soda and salt. Beat at low speed until soft dough forms. Stir in drops chips and nuts. Drop dough by heaping teaspoons 2 inches apart onto greased cookie sheets. Bake for 7 to 10 minutes, or until edges are light golden brown. Cool completely before storing. Makes 2 1/2 doz. cookies.

"Hospitality is making your guests feel at home, even though you wish they were."

AUTHOR UNKNOWN



THE THOMAS TRIBUNE



CONGRATULATIONS
TO TANYA MOXLEY
FOR PASSING HER
DRIVER'S TEST!

(FINALLY!! HIP-
HIP-HOORAY!)

IF YOU SHOULD
SEE HER ON THE
ROAD, DON'T FOR-
GET TO TOOT YOUR
HORN!

WEST COAST WAYNE



Well, a great big CONGRATULATIONS goes out to **Wayne Thomas** on his first business trip out to the West Coast; Oakland, California to be specific. It must be nice to work for a company that still has travel perks! We hope he enjoyed it because we're sure he had to earn it. Companies aren't giving those kind of trips away easy these days. With all the budget cutting, it's not easy to get a free lunch much less a trip across the country.

But wait, the good news doesn't end there. We're told that "Mr. West Coast" has also moved into a new office of his own. What's next? A personal secretary perhaps? With all this new-found privacy, let's hope he doesn't get tempted to spend all of his time "surfing" for "pen pals" on the Internet.

In addition to Wayne's other good news, we hear that he has passed another one of his exams leading to the coveted "Contemporary 2000" Certification. Upon successful completion of 2 more exams, (which he hopes to pass before year-end) Wayne will obtain full certification on the popular UNIX computer network system.

We definitely congratulate Wayne on his recent accomplishments, but we mainly thank the Lord for bringing him back home safe and sound.

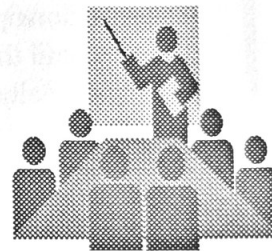
Welcome home from all of us.

CALL FOR REPORT CARD RESULTS

Well, school started in September and surely we should have some idea of where our children stand. Based on conversations, we're getting mixed reviews that can easily be cleared up by the students themselves. **Accept the challenge of having your grades published in the next edition of the family newsletter.** Don't be shy, let your family know how well you're doing. Also, remember, there is no shame in receiving an average grade if you are truly doing the best you can - we have all been there and we realize that there are sometimes extenuating circumstances for not receiving the top grade. But we would like to know your strengths and weaknesses - maybe we can offer some assistance.

We know that grades don't tell the whole story of how well a student is progressing, but they are the "measuring sticks" that society uses to determine your chances of success later in life. So, give your family a chance

to help you on your journey to success. Don't struggle alone if you don't have to. Share your school experience with older family members who have been there and possess a wealth of information that may open a new door of knowledge for you. So, if you would like to accept the challenge, please send a copy of your grades to the Editor, **Donna Thomas, at 11623 Drumcastle Terrace, Germantown, MD 20876.** (She can also be reached by phone at 301-540-2946.) We all look forward to congratulating our children on their efforts.



"Coming together is a beginning, Keeping together is progress, Working together is success."

Henry Ford

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ELECTION RESULTS (continued)



The main question asked during the final weeks of the campaign seemed to be whether or not Bob Dole could have done anything differently to change the outcome. According to some political analysts, the Republicans lost the race in 1995. After the voters placed their confidence in the Republican Party in 1994 and supported their "Contract With America", they let Newt Gingrich set a very negative tone and shut down the government, an act from which they would never recover in time. But then there are those who say Bob Dole, himself, failed the campaign in several serious ways. First, he let Pat Buchanan become a threat in the primaries which caused a heavy diversion of funds to the nomination. Secondly, his appeal to the public of a tax cut was found to bore everybody. Thirdly, he downplayed President Clinton's integrity issues until the eleventh hour, which was too late. And finally, his choice of Jack Kemp as a running mate was thought to be a good idea at first if Kemp could scream and carry the hatchet. Unfortunately, Kemp was also fairly complacent, leaving Dole to be his own hit man which did not play out very well.

The exit poles suggested that Dole's strategy emphasizing such divisive social issues as affirmative action and immigration may have drawn more white men, but produced a backlash among Hispanic and Asian American voters. Even in defeat, Republicans appear to be in a good position to capitalize during Clinton's second term on Whitewater, campaign fund-raising, sexual controversies and other alleged scandals that have plagued his administration: More than half the electorate say they do not believe Clinton is honest and trustworthy and an even larger percentage believe Clinton has not told the truth about Whitewater and other matters under investigation.

Well, there you have it. Next time we'll focus our attention on the "uncertain" issues.

W O H F L I G H T S C Y Z H S
P G N I P P A R W H E X E T T
A D P R L B A E E N L O N R I
C X Y E O S E E M B T E E A D
K T D P G T R I L E M E O E E
A N R L S O H O L A B E C N U
G S U A L C A T N A S O C O L
E I N C D K S R M E R R Y E N
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A T W S D S O F O T Y R S P O
C R H M O N O O C N O U I O N
W A F R S N A R A T S Y L P U
K P C A N D Y C A N E V S E S

(Words are listed in all directions: across, back, up, down, and diagonally upward and downward.

Words are always listed in a straight line.)

BONUS	CANDLES	CARDS
CHEER	CANDY CANE	GIFTS
CHIMNEY	DECEMBER	LIGHTS
FEAST	DECORATIONS	LISTS
MERRY	MISTLETOE	NOEL
TINSEL	WRAPPING	TOYS
STAR	TRIMMINGS	TREE
SEASON	STOCKINGS	YULE
PARTIES	SANTA CLAUS	SPIRIT
LOGS	TRADITIONS	SWEETS
FIREPLACE	PACKAGES	
ORNAMENTS		
PEACE ON EARTH		

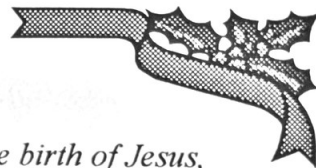
THE THOMAS TRIBUNE

PRAYER FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON

"Prayer is the nearest approach to God and the highest enjoyment of Him that we are capable of in this life. It is as much your duty to rise to pray as it is to pray when you are risen."

William Law

During this holiday season, may the Thomas family reflect often upon the following prayer. But I hope that everyone will offer Him their own words of thanks and praise dependent upon the spirit of your hearts. Remember that even the prayer that seems awkward and might be ridiculed if recited to others, may leave behind a seed of blessing. For, if nothing else, your soul has come nearer to God and a testimony has been given to Him in the most sincerest form. Therefore, we as a family must continue to pray!



*Loving Father, help us to remember the birth of Jesus,
that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds,
and the wisdom of the wise men.*

*Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world.
Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting.*

*Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings,
and teach us to be merry with clean hearts.*

*May the Christmas morning make us happy to be thy children,
and the Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts,
forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake.*

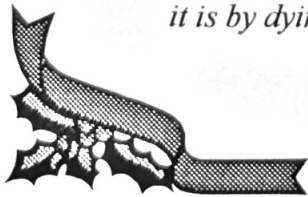
*Make us worthy, Lord, to serve our fellow men throughout
the world who live and die in poverty and hunger.*

*Give them, through our hands, this day their daily bread,
and by our understanding love, give Peace and Joy.*

*Lord, grant that I may seek to comfort rather than to be comforted;
to understand than to be understood; to love than to be loved;*

*for it is by forgetting self that one finds;
it is by dying that one awakens to eternal life.*

Amen.



Robert Louis Stevenson

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MESSAGE TO MY FAMILY.....written by Emma L. Thomas



After settling into my bed on October 11, 1996 and thanking the Lord for my blessings, I had trouble falling asleep. So, I read a while hoping sleep would come. It didn't. Sometimes when I have trouble sleeping, I listen to music. So, I put in a tape by Bob Marley and it played just fine, but sleep still didn't come. I got tired of listening to reggae, so I put in one of my favorite gospel tapes. It played one song and half of another and then stopped. I tried to take it out but couldn't because the tape had gotten jammed and I had to break it to get it out. I was very upset and felt the devil was hard at work. So, I just said, "Damn you devil, damn you for destroying the Lord's music. I'm sharing this with you because instead of letting my anger at the devil result in something bad, I decided to stay up and write this message to my family and turn this incident into something positive. My message is that the devil is out there working hard to destroy us but we need to come together as loving and caring adults to save ourselves and our children from the drugs, guns, alcohol, and disease that the devil tempts us with every day. He even has people burning our churches. Although some of us do care, we need to start thinking of ways and doing what we can to get our children on the right track. They are our future. And as the saying goes, if you make one step, the Lord will make the second. As a reminder of the things we need to have to make this world a better place, I'd like to share the following poem, which was given to me, with my family. I hope you will cherish it as much as I have.



SHOP IN HEAVEN'S GROCERY STORE



*I was walking down life's highway a long time ago
One day I saw a sign that read Heaven's Grocery Store
As I got closer, the door came open wide,
And when I came to myself, I was standing inside.
I saw a host of angels, they were standing everywhere
And one angel said, "My child, shop with care"
Everything a Christian needed was in the grocery store
And all you couldn't carry, you could come back the next day for more.
First, I got some patience, love was in the same row
Further down was understanding, you need that everywhere you go.
I got a box or two of wisdom, a bag or two of faith
I just couldn't miss the Holy Ghost for he was all over the place.
I stopped to get some strength and courage to help me run the race
By then my basket was getting full, but I remembered I needed some grace.
I didn't forget salvation, for salvation, that was free
So, I tried to get enough of that to save you and me.
Then I started to the counter to pay my grocery bill
For I thought I had everything to do my Master's will.
As I went up the aisle, I saw prayer and just had to put that in
For I knew when I stepped outside, I would run right into sin.
Peace and joy were plentiful, they were on the last shelf
Song and praises were hanging near so I just helped myself.
Then, I said now how much do I owe?
He smiled and said, just take them everywhere you go.
How much do I really owe?
He smiles and said, my Child, Jesus paid your bill a long time ago.*