

About Christmas



Christmas is here at last



The character of Santa Clause or Father Christmas is based on a real person, St. Nicholas, which explains his other name 'Santa Claus' which comes from the Dutch "Sinterklaas." Nicholas was a Christian leader from Myra (in modern-day Turkey) in the 4th century AD. He was very shy, and

wanted to give money to poor people without them knowing about it. It is said that one day, he climbed the roof of a house and dropped a purse of money down the chimney. It landed in the stocking which a girl had put to dry by the fire! This may explain the belief that Father Christmas comes down the chimney and places gifts in children's stockings.



So when did the Christmas tree go indoors? Legend has it that the tradition was begun by Martin Luther in Germany. He was a monk and church reformer who lived from 1483 to 1546. According to the legend, Luther was returning home one wintry night when he saw the stars twinkling in the sky through the tree branches. Luther

was amazed by the sight, and when he arrived home, he was eager to tell his family about it. To help them understand, he went to the woods and cut down a small fir tree. Luther brought it indoors and decorated it with candles, which represented the stars he had seen.



According to legend, a kindly nobleman grew despondent over the death of his beloved wife and foolishly squandered his fortune. This left his three young daughters without dowries and thus facing a life of spinsterhood.

The generous St. Nicholas, hearing of the girls' plight, set forth to help. Wishing to remain anonymous, he rode his white horse by the nobleman's house and threw three small pouches of gold coins down the chimney where they were fortuitously captured by the stockings the young women had hung by the fireplace to dry.



It was not long after Europeans began using Christmas trees that special decorations were used to adorn them. Food items, such as candies and cookies, were used predominately and straight white candy sticks were one of the confections used as ornamentation. Legend has it that during the 17th century, craftsmen created the white sticks of candy in the shape of shepherds' crooks at the suggestion of the choirmaster at the Cologne Cathedral in Germany.



A form of Christmas card began in England first when young boys practiced their writing skills by creating Christmas greetings for their parents, but it is Sir Henry Cole who is credited with creating the first real Christmas card. The first director of London's Victoria and Albert Museum, Sir Henry found himself too busy in the Christmas season of 1843 to compose individual Christmas greetings for his friends . He commissioned artist John Calcott Horsley for the illustration. The card featured three panels, with the center panel depicting a family enjoying Christmas festivities and the card was inscribed with the message "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to You."

Information from Internet

Arranged by Angel Zhang

New Staff Introduction

By Angel Zhang



Josh, who comes from the icy place called Alaska, loves to play sports, ski, hike, hang out with the kids in his church and visit his family when he is in America. Here in China, he likes to play sports, cook, and see his friends.

He is here because he wants to be helpful in China and not only helpful in Alaska. He is going to go back to America next semester, but he said even though he will go home, a piece of him will stay here.

His favorite thing

in Ping Liang is the people because they are always kind to him.

In his life, he hopes he can learn to be more kind and more humble, and also can learn to make other people more important than himself.

Only For Dave and Judy

We are so thankful for the opportunity to spend the past 2 months at the Oasis Training Center. Getting to know the staff, interns and students has been the highlight. The staff is a very capable group with great enthusiasm and ability. Heather Choate's vision and leadership have built a good reputation for the school and Dennis Choate's dry sense of humor and ability to handle the computer makes them a great leadership team. The young staff brings a variety of ability, gifts and experience to their roles, and it's been a joy to get to know each one of them. We've also seen how important the interns are to the operation of the school and have appreciated all the help we have received from them. Finally, the students are a pleasure to work with. They are committed not only to becoming competent in their English language and computer ability, but also desire to develop their character in order to become mature, well rounded members of society. We will miss each one of you and will think of you often.



Christmas Party in The Oasis Activity Center

Angel Zhang



On December 21st, we held our Christmas party in the new big and neat activity center—the Oasis. There were more than 150 people who participated in the party, including all the OTC teachers, interns and students, we also invited some of the OTC graduates who live near us and some of the Zhi Zhong English teachers.

This was the biggest Christmas party we have had in OTC. The Oasis was just big enough and it was full of people that night. The party not only gave us the chance to relax and have fun, but also provided a good platform for us to meet our friends and talk with them. At 6 pm, the party started. At first, we enjoyed

some cookies, fruit and drinks. The most enjoyable and interesting part was the games. We had lots of fun games. For instance, Have you seen my elf?, pass the parcel, balloon popping, three deep, and fruit basket turnover. Some of the grade 2 students performed a reader's theatre which was called "A Baker's Dozen." Mr. Dave and Ms. Judy read the story of Jesus' birth for us in both English and Chinese. At last, we sang some Christmas songs together to end the party. I believe this will make good memories for everyone.



The Orphanage Christmas Party

Yesterday I and four other classmates and all of the teachers went to the PL orphanage. This is a strange place for me. Five rows of one floor houses were surrounded by a high brick wall. This place isn't just for orphans. It is also for old people who have a handicap or are homeless. In a dining room, there were about 10 old people and about 17 children sitting when we came in. We brought cakes, toys, books, clothes and juice. Teachers willingly talked with them and separated the food and drink for them. Although some of them couldn't speak and hear, our teachers did their best to converse with them. Then, we took gifts like clothes to each room because there were some old people and handicapped children who couldn't come to the dining room. During the party, Ms. Diane talked with a blind old man who said they rarely had some guests and they just go out a few times in one year. He really felt happy because of us coming. Before we left, we took a photo and they treated us to dumplings. It was a wonderful experience!



—By Hunter Kun

On Tuesday afternoon, I went to the orphanage with my American teachers and several classmates to celebrate Christmas with them together. When I got there, the only thing I found was that place's environment was not as good as I imagined. We brought clothes, cakes, drinks, and toys for the elders and orphans. I fed the little handicap children cakes and played games with them. I communicated with an old man who was blind, but I found that happiness always appeared on his face. He said that even though he could not see, he never felt lonely as the nurses treated him as their own relative without complaints. I saw the nurses showed benevolence and patience and I was moved deeply. I think money can solve many problems, but it can not warm peoples' hearts. Maybe a simple word, a friendly greeting or a good action can show precious love to everyone, can it not?



—By Emily Song



MERRY CHRISTMAS DAY!

Have you ever thought about the children in an orphanage? Do you want to know what their life is like? I would like to share my experience with you. I went to Ping Liang orphanage with my foreign teachers on Christmas Day. We had a special Christmas party at the orphanage. When I saw the orphans and old people, I felt so sad. Their life is more difficult than mine and their situation is harder than me many times. From our conversation, I knew many things about them. I talked with a girl who is as old as me. She is also 19 years old. She said, "When I was young, my parents abandoned me because I got very sick. At that time, I felt so ashamed about myself because I always complain

that my life is not good. When I saw their situation, I thought I am happier than them. We can eat until we are full every day, we have warm clothes to wear, and we have the opportunity to come to school. We should be satisfied with what we have. In conclusion, we had a meaningful afternoon with the orphans.

—By Susan Su

Josh and Angel's Recommendation



I've never
known any trouble that an
hour' reading didn't assuage.
—Charles De Secondat



Book Title	Author	Location	Date	China Daily Newspaper Article Title and Page#
Hocus Pocus	Strasser	II C-2		
Lostmans River	Defelice	II B-1	12,19,07	Turkish Troops Cross into Iraq Pg.8
Thank you	Robinson	II B-1		
The Crazy Gang Nextdoor	Williams	II C-2	12,19,07	London to Host Chinese Culture Celebration Pg.3
Dance	Grau	II C-3	12,19,07	Hi, I'm Haibao of Expo Pg,1
Never Give in	Mansfield	II C-2	12,21,07	Hooray for 'Chinawood' Pg.18
The Border	Rue	II B-2	12,20,07	Stock Market recovers after slide Pg. 14
Christy	Marshall	II A-1		
Stepsister from the Planet Weird	Lantz	II A-2	12,21,07	China's Female Rooney' May Miss Olympics with Injury Pg. 19
One-Eyed Cat	Fox	II C-1		
The Tiger Rising	Dicamillo	II B-1	12,21,07	Soldiers' Sacrifice Pg. 18



Angel's Angle

This is the last issue of "We OTC" for this whole semester and this year. By the chance, please allow me to give my thanks to all of you for reading it; to some of the teachers and students who provided the articles and pictures; and especially to Ms. Christy for been giving me ideas and editing the articles.

This semester will be finished in two more weeks and the new year is coming soon. I wish everyone a happy New Year and hope you enjoy the rest of the two weeks and also hoping all the Grade 1 students have a good trip for your Beijing Trip. I am glad that "We, OTC" has been one of your friends while you have been in OTC. See you next year!

Look Here!

The schedules for the coming activities:

- ◆ **January 12, 2008** Winter holiday begins
- ◆ **January 12-24, 2008** Beijing Connection
- ◆ **February 24, 2008 evening** School starts
- ◆ **February 25, 2008 morning** 3rd Quarter classes begin

