

## California Breezes

Merry Christmas to all!!

## COLUMN LEFT

Time to Say  
"Good-bye"  
to '94

That old tradition of toasting the New Year while ringing out the Old is nearly upon us, and it causes one to take time to reflect back on the past twelve months, to recall those events of fortune and misfortune, and to lay the foundation for the next twelve months by repeating those dreaded words "I resolve...". We feel comfortable with this passing of the old; we want to make a fresh start on some of those nagging problems that plagued us throughout the previous year. There is something about January 1st that seems to inspire new confidence in our abilities to change bad habits or bad luck. I know I feel that this ceremonious "fresh start" is the right time to resolve to improve in some ways, or at least to not repeat the same mistakes I made last year. There is hope behind those feelings, that resolve. The hope is that I will somehow have more self-discipline, more courage, and more control over my destiny.



What I don't think about is that perhaps what I really need more of is *luck*.

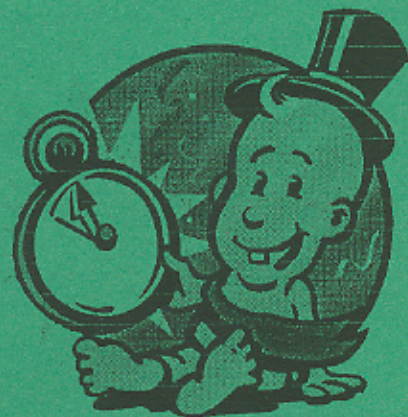
Looking back can be at least partly painful, when we see the problems we encountered in our relationships. Break-ups, or nasty fights, or growing tensions that never did get fully resolved serve to remind us that the struggles of last year can follow us into the new year unless some change of heart impels the mind to a change of behavior. My luck with relationships was nothing to brag about in 1994, after having broken up with Tim just before Thanksgiving. I look back and see that I got a year older, a year wiser, but I also go into 1995 without a relationship. This does not mean I did not have my chances, it just means that none of them panned out. So I look forward to a new year, a fresh start in this category.

Reflecting back is also important for recognizing those events that were positive and fulfilling.

Perhaps it was that promotion at work, or a new marriage, or a new child to be thankful for. Perhaps it was the progress made in the struggle over an addiction or nagging bad habit that gives one reason to close out '94 on a cheery note. Perhaps the very fact that we *survived* is reason alone to feel positive. Here in southern California, we survived a devastating earthquake, raging firestorms, destructive mudslides, and the riots. Whew! Just seeing the end of this year with body and mind intact is good enough!

So, 1995 is almost here, and I say "good-bye" to 1994. I will raise my glass at midnight on the last day and toast not the passing of a great year, but the dawn of a new and fresh start.

I wish you all a very *Happy New Year!*



## Namero Uno

Listen my children and you shall hear

the secret of life from papa dear.

How you ration your time is all up to you,

But setting PRIORITIES is the first thing to do.

Mine are as follows; I hope you will agree,

This can help us live life more fruitfully.

On top of my list is our dear God and Lord,

following HIS way will earn our reward.

He sent His Son Jesus to show us the way,

So make it a habit to live it each day

Next comes the family where all life began,

Whether spouse, parent, or child, we're part of God's plan.

To love one another is His greatest decree,

To be happy on earth into eternity.

Our work, job or duties must be high on the list;

We've been given certain talents and we must persist

in developing our skills the best that we can,

for the necessities of life and for all of man.

Also important are fun, friends, and neighbors.



With them share ourselves and the fruits of our labors.

But we must also find time to spend by ourselves;

To take stock of our life and where our future dwells.

I hope you don't mind my bending your ear.

I love you all dearly and it's my fervent prayer

That when life is all over for one and for all,

We'll be together again in God's heavenly hall.

So tell the old devil with his slick wily ways,

You won't listen to him for the rest of your days.

Put your trust in Lord Jesus and tell Him He'll be

Your number one goal and priority.

*by Dad, with help from the Holy Spirit*

## coffee talk...

Bowing to the over exuberance of Melissa, my roommate, we went out on Tuesday, the 5th, to a local tree lot and picked out a nice, not-too-bushy 6 ft. Noble tree for the corner of the living room. Although she paid for it, she wanted me to pick it out, and we both agreed on one and hauled it home. With her boyfriend George keeping our eggnog cups filled (luckily we had some brandy in the cupboard!), the three of us proceeded to display definite proof that we were in the Christmas spirit. It's a beautiful tree, I have to admit, and hopefully we won't be sick of it by Christmas day!

Christmas gift-buying is going to be interesting this year, as I am one of many on a modest budget this year. I take comfort in that old saying, "It's not the gift that counts, but the thought." There actually are many neat things one can buy for under \$25. The way we go through coffee in this house, bags of beans might be found under the tree this year.

Looks like Christmas Eve will find me cooking prime rib for Melissa and George, and hopefully some visits to friends will help to spread the holiday cheer. Alas, once again, a green Christmas--not a drop of snow in the holiday forecast! Oh well, I am sure some of you will make up for what I will lack!



Once again, full-time employees at Costco will receive a turkey for Christmas. Thanks, boss!

# Pals Apart

Best Friends are supposed to last forever.  
So how come all yours have just faded away?

The first clue that Tim's wedding was not going to turn out well was the minivan that Tim met me at the airport in, a minivan with a woodgrain dashboard and a red plush interior like a Disney version of a French whorehouse. Maybe it belonged to his parents, I thought, or to the bride's. But Tim had bought the minivan and he loved it and he loved to talk about it, especially the very good gasoline mileage he was experiencing from it. He looked too healthy, like he'd been playing tennis. There weren't any roaches in the ashtrays. I checked. We hadn't seen each other in a year or so, and I couldn't figure out whether this was a big joke or whether he meant it: the car, the wedding, the relatives, the job with his father-in-law's company. I couldn't read him, which was a strange feeling. Tim and I had been buddies in college, partners in crime. The joke was supposed to be on everybody else. We didn't even get to the motel before I figured out what was going on: This friendship had expired. Somewhere, invisibly, something had changed. Maybe he'd grown up. Maybe I'd grown up, though it didn't seem likely. We kept the ball rolling, we made the regular jokes, but the easy part was over. We were playing at friendly conversation, pretending.

There are other ways for friendships to end. Once in a while there's the Fight, or the Insult, or the Girlfriend (or various combinations: the Fight about the Insult to the Girlfriend). But most friendships end in a fade. One day you notice that they haven't called in a while. Or you run into them at a party, or on the street, and you notice that they are not quite as interesting or cool as you thought they were. It's not worth officially calling it off, but it's over anyway and you both know it. It's one of the things you learn in second grade: You have friends, and then your life changes and they're not your friends anymore. Nobody's to blame; one day you just wake up and the connection isn't there. Tim had moved back to the suburbs, met a fine girl, and now he was getting married to her. Life goes on. But we'd been good friends, Tim and I--best friends, to use the sixth-grade term. We'd been coconspirators, accomplices. We had used a microphone stand to shoot bottle rockets at passing trucks; we had drunk red wine and watched the sun come. I thought about all the friends I'd outgrown. I thought of Brad in California and Peter in Seattle. It seemed to take so little: an inch to the left, an inch to the right, and then you found

yourselves miles apart. I kept circling back to what the woman I was dating had said about men and friendships: wondering if things would be different if we had talked more, talked about things that mattered, talked about feelings, maybe. This was impossible, of course. She didn't understand what we'd all learned in sixth grade: There are invisible lines everywhere, and if you accidentally cross one you turn into a fairy. Even if you grow up and realize it's bullshit, it's too late--you never learned how to do it, your *friends* never learned how to do it, so you don't do it. You talk about guitars and car engines, movies and sports instead. Also I was thinking about my father's life, which was frightening. He had acquaintances from work, and then he had the official Old Friends that he saw every three years or so, but that was it. Even with the Old Friends, there was something artificial, as if a taxidermist had been at work. They reminded each other of the good times. They didn't seem to talk about anything that mattered. I saw myself meeting Tim for a drink in about ten or fifteen years, making the regulation jokes about bellies and hairlines, the subtle boasting about children and money. Was my father lonely? Hard to say. My mother, though, made friends

## ONE SOLITARY LIFE

Here is a man  
 who was born of Jewish parents,  
 the child of a peasant woman.  
 He never wrote a book;  
 He never held an office.  
 He never owned a home.  
 He never had a family.  
 He never went to college.  
 He never put a foot inside a big  
 city.  
 He never traveled two hundred  
 miles  
 from the place where He was born.  
 He never did one of the things  
 that usually accompanies greatness.  
 He had no credentials but Himself.

While still a young man,  
 the tide of popular opinion  
 turned against Him.  
 His friends ran away;  
 one of them denied Him.  
 He was nailed to a cross  
 between two thieves.  
 His executioners gambled for  
 the only piece of property  
 He had on earth: His coat.

When He was dead,  
 He was taken down  
 and laid in a borrowed grave,  
 through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen wide centuries have come  
 and gone,

and He is the centerpiece  
 of the human race and the leader  
 of the column of progress.

I am far within the mark  
 when I say that all the armies  
 that ever marched,  
 and all the navies  
 that were ever built,  
 have not affected the life of man  
 upon Earth,  
 as powerfully as has that  
 One Solitary Life.

-----Anonymous

(Submitted by Mary Lou)



*Happy Birtzday  
 to Robin, who  
 turns 8 Dec. 30!*

## Those Darn Resolutions!

You know 'em--the ones you  
 wish you never made! Some  
 common ones and what they  
*really mean!*

**1. To eat better; i.e., less fat,  
 less salt and sugar, more fiber  
 and protein.**

(What, and give up those jelly  
 donuts on Sundays?)

**2. To exercise more  
 frequently.**

(This actually means more brisk  
 walks to the fridge during  
 commercial breaks!)

**3. To be more patient to my  
 spouse, children, etc.**

(Hey, if I don't yell at them, how  
 are they gonna learn?)

**4. To read more and watch  
 television less.**

(H-mmm, does reading the TV  
 Guide count?)

**5. To get my credit cards  
 under control.**

(That is, until the next "Now's  
 the Time to Buy" sale!)

**6. To do volunteer work.**

(Yeah, like I got the time!)

---Well, there's always next  
 year!!

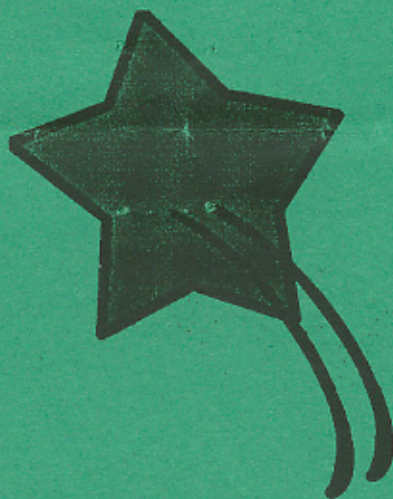


and kept them, and she talked about anything with them. Friendship is for girls, apparently. Men are hard and stoic and lonely and brave. The wedding Mass was long and loud and featured lots of standing, sitting, and kneeling, like an exercise video. I'll admit there was a moment when the priest said, "I now pronounce you," etc., in which I felt a sort of dumb whimpering in my chest, like the ending of a bad movie, where they mean to make you cry so you'll forget the awfulness of the rest of it. And then of course the reception, where all the old clichés came true: the rubber chicken, the waltzing band, the cheap California champagne, and a relative of the bride's, eleven-years old, who went from table to table sneaking drinks and wound up puking in the bushes. I danced with an official College Friend of the bride's. I made a toast. I told jokes, standing on the country club verandah and smoking. Still, I couldn't shake the lonely feeling from the night before. In the room of candles and flowers and perfume, I thought of a night from a long time ago when I hadn't seen Tim for a while and then he was back in town--maybe Christmas vacation or something. It was winter, and cold. And we went out and closed down this one bar, talking some kind of shit; I don't remember except that I was drunk by the end. And I remember standing in the cold outside and just feeling so happy to see him--that was all, a simple feeling. And I told him so. And he smiled to hear it and he ducked his head in a pleased way, there in the cold and the dark.

Toward the end of the reception I was drunk, I think. I went up to Tim where he was standing between dances. The

table of presents was behind him, pink and peach and silver. "Tim," I said, "what is this shit?" "This is life," he said. "This is what it's all about!" He clapped me on the shoulder, grinning at me, his special friend, and then disappeared back into the crowd.

(Reprinted from Details magazine, by Kevin Canty.)



## FLAVORS OF THE WORLD

### VICTORIAN "EGGNOG"

*The English used to call this version of the classic Christmas drink sack posset. "Sack" referred to wines imported from Spain. "Posset"--from the Middle English poshet (of uncertain meaning)--is a hot drink made of sweetened, spiced milk and ale or wine.*

6 SERVINGS

2 cups whipping cream

1 cup half and half

6 large egg yolks

1/2 cup sugar

1 teaspoon ground nutmeg

Additional ground nutmeg

Bring cream and half and half to simmer in large saucepan. Whisk yolks and sugar in large bowl to

blend. Gradually whisk hot cream mixture into yolk mixture. Return mixture to same saucepan. Stir over medium-low heat until mixture thickens and leaves path on back of spoon when finger is drawn across, about 4 minutes (do not boil). Strain into bowl. Stir in nutmeg. Cool slightly.

*(Can be made 1 day ahead. Cover and chill. If desired, rewarm over low heat, stirring occasionally, before continuing.)*

Divide warm or cold mixture among 6 cups or glasses. Stir 1 tablespoon Sherry into each. Sprinkle additional nutmeg over each and serve.

## miscellany

Despite the later-than-normal printing of this newsletter, I heard only from Dad and Mary Lou, and had hoped to pack this issue with notes from more of you. So, I did the best I could, and hope that after the new year, I will get something from more of you. Remember, even if you think no one would be interested in your day-to-day activities, or that no one wants to hear your comments or opinions about anything, YOU'RE WRONG!! What may sound trivial to you we find interesting! And, it keeps us somewhat in touch with each other!

I wish all of you the best of this holiday season!!





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