

2010 Edition!

'Twas the Night Before Christmas:

MICHAEL'S ANNUAL CHRISTMAS COLUMN

Chocolate and champagne, romance with a zing, black lace and Nyquil, a whip with a sting, old movies and kitties and gold nipple rings, these are a few of my favorite things."

"God, I just love the old-time Christmas carols," I thought as I hummed my way into the unholy specter of holiday shopping.

The scene? Christmas Eve. I had an hour left until the stores closed. I was armed with an ATM card, \$5,000 in cash, my Centurion Amex and absolutely no idea of what to buy for anyone. But I had a song in my heart and a thermos of cognac-laced espresso on the front seat. The velvet-clad valet parking attendant beckoned. "What the hell," I said, grabbing my Santa hat and candy cane. "It's all for a good Claus."

Ferretting out the truth

I bounded to the elevator below Neiman Marcus and hit the "up" button. The air was filled with music. "Chestnuts roasting on an open fire..." Ah, sweet thoughts of the Christmas Eve tree torching-to-consume filled my mind.

Abruptly, the elevator opened and I was face to Shar-Pei wrinkle with a 140-year-old woman grappling with what appeared to be a large, beady-eyed ferret, or was it, oh no, a weasel, that was wrapped tightly around her neck. Thinking quickly, I grabbed the rodent and flung it to the ground.

"Stand back!" I yelled. "It could be rabid!" Burying the heel of my Christmas Prada loafers in its skull, I felt the satisfying crunch of splintering bone. I held the poor woman close, out of harm's way, as a pair of garish glass eyes rolled between our feet toward the cosmetic counter and the svelte pelt quivered. She began to scream. "My wrap! My wrap!"

"It's all right, ma'am," I said. "Gift wrapping in on the upper level. Have a Merry Christmas!"

As I turned to make my way out of the store and into the holiday throng, it suddenly dawned on me that there were bunches, no, hordes, of women wrapped in dead animal hides lurking around me.

Why, the entire store was filled with 'em! This wasn't some Orwellian nightmare animal rebellion; these people were actually wearing fur. I was surrounded

by hordes of dirty, rotten, stinking fur-skimos.

Ack! Ack! Phooey! Phooey!

I glanced around furtively. Damn! There's never a vial of fresh blood around when you really need it.

You know, I could be Moses if I only had a larger staff

Christmas in the tropics is one thing, but Christmas at our house is another reality altogether. We face a clash of cultures, as Susan prefers the traditional, born-and-raised-in-the-Midwest approach. She puts on a happy stack of music, perhaps sweet dulcimer mixed in with a bit of Bing Crosby and soft piano, while preparing spiced cider and hot chocolate for our guests. She prefers to gather with close friends and family and decorate the tree with the handmade and heirloom ornaments we have collected, pausing with each ornament to reflect on its origin and reminisce on the fellowship and caring that the holiday season brings out in most of us.

Later, after the tree is finished and the piles of presents carefully arranged, after the smoking and tooting train has begun its never-ending circle cycle, champagne is solemnly sipped by all as our plans for helping the poor, hungry and less fortunate are discussed.

I, on the other hand, take a slightly less formal approach.

First, I gut the garage and set-up a huge stage containing a completely robotic "Away in the Manger" diorama. The set includes a dozen anatomically correct farm animals, a 2,000-watt Star O'



LIGHTEN UP!

By Michael Farver

David™ halogen spotlight, three full-size camels and a crib stuffed with fire-retardant fiberglass straw.

My family and friends won't be following the light in the sky to just any old mangy manger. I proudly feature the "Baby Jesus of Nazareth" model, straight from the Franklin Mint's Great Religions Signature series, equipped with a Holographic Halo-Head™ 3-D

Son-o-God halo projection system, a Sign-of-the-Cross™ voice-box and a He-Heals-the-Sick™ holy hand gesture option.

After the wise men, and women, arrive, we gather together and all do multiple shots of chilled Hanger 1 vodka, followed by my special homemade garlic, fresh tomato and artichoke pizza, washed-down with magnums of 1992 La Grande Dame champagne. I've found that Nine Inch Nails and the Black Crowes cranked until your ears bleed is perfect background music for the traditional glass ornament toss, where we all try to see how far away from the tree we can stand and still get the ornaments to stick in the branches without shattering on the wood floor when we throw them at the tree.

After all of the ornaments are hanging or broken, we gather all the trimmings, tinsel and leftover wrapping paper in a pile, drench the tree with Grand Marnier and torch the whole thing in a towering inferno of brightly colored flames.

Like I said ... Chestnuts roasting on an open fire ... I think it's very

important to set an example for the children, don't you agree?

You say it's your birthday

And I don't think the fun should stop with the tree decorating or torching. On Christ's birthday, as the sun rises, it is my job to get the ice cream birthday cake out of the freezer to let it thaw a bit while we all have a mimosa or two. Or three.

You know, I never realized it, but no matter how many multitudes we have over for birthday cake, there is always enough to go around. Sound fishy? Go figure.

Then we gather for the ceremonial lighting of the candle. Now here's where the arguments usually begin. You know, the "Is it one candle in the cake because it's baby Jesus' first year, or no candles because he's just been born and won't be a year old for a year yet," argument.

Personally, I belong to the one-candle school. I mean really, what's a birthday cake without a candle?

'Twas the night before Christmas

It 'twas the night before Christmas, and all through our crib, we were both playing dress-up: I was wearing a bib.

Susan's stockings had runs, but we just didn't care,

Some like legs in nylon, I like my legs bare.

And while Kleo & the kitties purred sweet dreams of ham,

We toasted with champagne and blasted classic Black Crowe jams.

When out on the lawn there arose such a racket,

I let go of her garters and put down the straitjacket.

Away to the window I blew in a flash.

Pulled out my Sig Sauer and stashed all the cash.

When what to my mascaraed eyes should appear, but a sled sheathed in leather and red Latex reindeer.

He was satin and lacy from his head to his foot;

he blew us both kisses, now how did that look?

He spoke not a word but went straight to his work, pulled out French lace and spiked heels, then turned with a jerk.

And laying a finger underneath his red nose, said: "I'm old and I'm chubby and I wear women's clothes."

Peace on Earth. And a moment of silence in memory of those whom we have lost, either in mind, body or spirit in the past year.

Happy Holly-daze!



I love you, WKLI