

# **the LOOKOUT**

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK

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**DECEMBER 1973**



# A Holiday Message

Dear Friends,

Perhaps you know the saying, "With your help no dream is impossible." How true it is and how grateful we are that it is so.

Your help this year has made many of our dreams possible. This year saw more SCI Christmas Boxes delivered to more men and women at sea than ever before. This year found almost double the number of people attending courses at our Roosevelt Institute of Maritime and General Studies. This year a record number of seamen successfully completed courses in our Merchant Marine School.

These were only a few of our dreams. We have many more for next year and the future. But without your help many of our dreams would not have been possible.

So at this Holiday Season, we send you our grateful thanks and earnestly pray,

*"That the true joys of Christmas  
with you may abide,  
That your course will be blessed  
by a smooth running tide,  
With no storm nor tempest may  
the New Year be fraught,  
May God bring all safe-home  
to a welcoming port."*

THE REV. JOHN M. MULLIGAN, D.D.  
Director

## the LOOKOUT

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**Editor's Note:** Because many of our seamen guests are from foreign countries, Christmas greetings at SCI are given and responded to, in a variety of languages. Carols of all nations are played in our chapel during Christmas week with participants often singing the well-known tunes in their own native tongue. Somehow, this international flavor of Christmas makes the season all the more special and it also makes the following article particularly appropriate.

# Celebrating Christmas Around the World

by Robert E. Harper

The celebration of Christmas is so much of an accustomed occasion for most Americans, they sometimes forget that it is done differently in other countries.

Customs and names, even dates of events, are not the same. The ways the Birth of Christ is celebrated vary around the world. No matter the differences, the joy, delight and significance of this beautiful season are one and the same eternal.

Children in Syria wait up for the "Magic Mule," said to arrive loaded with presents at midnight precisely. Of course, no child has ever stayed awake long enough to see him. The age-old story stems from Lilat-al-Kadr, the "Night of Destiny," or Twelfth Night

Eve, when trees bend in reverence before the three kings, who have found the Christ Child.

A wayfarer tethered his mule to a tree close to midnight, walking on to the village. The mule was gone, when he returned, but he heard braying above him. And there, high up in the

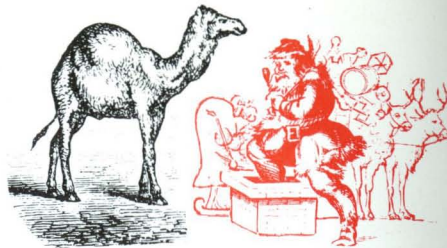


tree, was his animal. The tree had bent down reverently at the magic hour and had caught up the mule in its branches.

There is also the "Little Camel" who brings gifts in Syria. He was too young, no doubt, to stand the arduous journey with the Magi. When he fell exhausted outside the manger, the tiny Jesus heard his groaning and blessed him with immortality. Children leave water and wheat for him on Twelfth Night; he leaves them candies and toys. But, if they have been bad, telltale black marks are left on their small wrists.

Christmas Eve in Armenia is Twelfth Night, so its people celebrate January 7, as the "old and true" Christmas, in keeping with the Julian, not the Gregorian calendar.

In Italy, "la Befana" rides her broomstick, flying from chimney to chimney of houses where children live. She slides down sooty flues, leaving presents for the good ones. The bad girls



and boys get bags of ashes, charcoal and pebbles. While following the "Star of Bethlehem," the Magi stopped to ask Befana to join them. She was very busy with her sweeping. She said she would catch up with them, but she hasn't yet made it. For centuries, she has searched for the "Bambino Gesu," without success. She tries anew each Twelfth Night, leaving gifts for children along her way.

Most Latin American countries observe "Three Kings' Day," a holdover from Spain, where parents sometimes blacked their youngest's faces, to prove that King Balthasar kissed them as they slept.

In Puerto Rico, on the eve of January 6, children put grass and bowls of water under their beds for the camels of the kings. Next morning, the grass has been eaten; the water drunk. In the bowls, also in their shoes, children find cakes, candies, toys. Adapted to mid-summer climate and tailored to regional customs, castanets and guitars are combined with music of the bells, to celebrate Christmas, Latin style.

Christmas gets under way on St. Nicholas Day in Germany. The decorated tree is the centerpiece of a very gay celebration. Deep snow and quaint buildings create backdrops unequaled for house-to-house caroling which Austrians consider absolutely essential to celebrating the season.



Christmas is called "Sheng Dan Jieh" in China and that means "Holy Birth Festival." With Santas and decorated trees very much in evidence, it closely resembles the Western celebration. In Switzerland, a girl-angel called Kriss-kindl is gift-bearer where Christmas is a quiet and spiritual family time.

Christmas Eve is an all-night joyous

the adoption of Western Christmas traditions in Japan, but little or no reference to the religious meanings of the season.

Christmas is just a time for fun in India, since the British had declared it a holiday. Otherwise, any resemblance to American and English celebrations depends on whether missionaries were



affair in France and St. Nicholas Day is December 6, though not a legal holiday. Gifts for the children are left in shoes by "Pere Noel." Creches, or miniature Nativity scenes, not only contain the manger, but figures of the baker, the grocer, the mayor and other local personalities.

Because it is mid-summer weather in Australia, festivities "Down Under"

ever in the area. Customs vary slightly in Scandinavia — Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden. St. Lucia's Day, December 13, opens the holidays in Sweden. Girls wear halos of candles, "Crown of the Day." Visits to Finnish baths are customary on Christmas Eve.

Music and mirth are keys to the Spanish season, and "Three Wise Men" bring gifts on January 6. In Belgium, the event is very colorful, with a costume festival, play-going, processions and group singing countrywide. Holland has a big parade. St. Nick rides on a horse with "Black Peter," who takes care of the bad boys and girls along the way. In Mexico, Christmas holidays start on December 16, with "posadas" or "inns," remembering where the Holy Family sought shelter. Mexican families visit back and forth as they re-enact the event. Christmas Day, however, is a quiet one at home, and children receive gifts on Epiphany, January 6.

In England, the celebration is much as it is in America, with the exception of "Boxing Day," December 26. The name comes from the custom of giving boxes filled with money to servants and the poor.



are staged outdoors mainly. Beach parties on Christmas are commonplace. There's a three-day festival in Turkey, where the first St. Nicholas was born. There is a Santa and trees and gifts in

to them to watch the weather,  
to keep the halliards clear  
for running, to remember that  
"any fool can carry on but only  
the wise man knows how to  
shorten sail in time"... and so  
on, in the manner of Ancient  
Mariners of all the world over.  
But the vital truth of sea-  
life is to be found in the  
ancient saying that it is  
"The stout hearts that make  
the ship safe".

Having been brought up  
on it I pass it on to them  
in all confidence and  
affection. Joseph Conrad.

Reproduction of a letter  
presented by Mr. James A. Farrell  
to SCI's Joseph Conrad Memorial Library

Joseph Conrad  
December 3, 1857—August 3, 1924

Seaman and novelist. Author of  
thirteen novels, two volumes of  
memoirs and twenty-eight short  
stories.

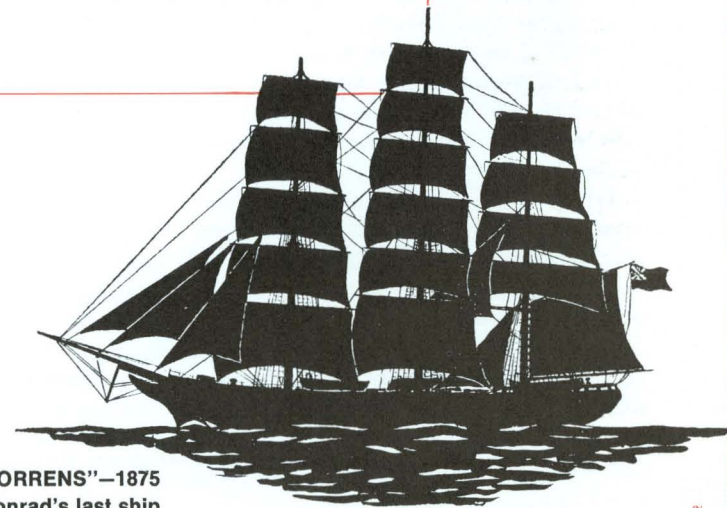
2<sup>d</sup>. June 1923.

EFFENDI HILL  
OYSTER BAY, LONG ISLAND  
NEW YORK

TELEPHONE  
OYSTER BAY, 257

On leaving this hospitable  
Country where the cream is  
excellent and the milk of  
human kindness apparently  
never ceases to flow I  
assume an ancient mariner's  
privilege of sending to  
the Owners and the Ships-  
Company of the Tusitala my  
brotherly good wishes for  
fair winds and clear skies  
on all their voyages. And  
may they be many!

And I would recommend



"THE TORRENS"—1875  
Joseph Conrad's last ship



# Plum Duff

an obscure but delicious Nautical Holiday Dessert.

Since adding variety to the traditional holiday dinner is always a challenge to the concerned cook, we thought our December 1963 Lookout story on Plum Duff is well worth the retelling.

It seems that Miss Terwilliger, our director of food services, was trying to solve this annual menu dilemma, when one of the old timers chanced into the cafeteria with the question "Why aren't Plum Duff served?"

Why? Why not. Seamen had devoured it by the barrels at the turn of the century and it was probably as well known as salt pork and hard-tack during the 1800's.

But where would one find the recipe. Although plum duff was known to be a dessert, it evidently had fallen out of favor with the advent of refrigeration for the merchant ship's galley.

First, all the cookbooks in the SCI library were checked to no avail. Then the wealth of archaic cookbooks in the New York Public Library plus dictionaries of nautical terms were examined, but yielded no definitive results.

By accident, one of the Institute's employees (Mrs. Gladys MacDonald Kadish—now retired) heard that we were looking for a recipe for plum duff and came to the rescue. Her father had been a sea captain and she said that she "... remembered plum duff well because her father talked about it and that her mother made it for Christmas when he was at home. It was a standby; and plum duff was often the family choice for dessert after the big Christmas turkey or goose dinner. She was able to resurrect the recipe from the family cook book and the riddle was

solved.

As to why the dessert is called plum "duff" no one is really sure. The word "duff" is of obscure origin. One story goes that an Irish cook found a dough-pudding recipe and whipped it up for his crew. Asked what he called it, he replied: "Duff—here it is in the book." "But that's dough," a seaman objected. "If r-o-u-g-h spells ruff, and t-o-u-g-h spells tuff, why don't d-o-u-g-h spell duff?" was the cook's silencer.

Seamen's slang gave plum duff still another name, according to a GLOSSARY OF SEA TERMS by Gershom Bradford—"railroad duff," when the

raisins are so few and far between that sailors say they find only one at each station!

Whether its called Irish "dough (f)" or railroad duff, this spicy pudding from the days of sail will be a welcome and delicious addition to the holiday table of the adventurous cook.

*In case raisins are in short supply at your local grocer, we are also including a plum duff recipe sent to us by Miss Anne Frances Hodgkins. In that it uses prunes (dried plums) it might well be the definitive recipe. In either case, you'll have a real treat for the holidays.*



## CAPTAIN MACDONALD'S PLUM DUFF

1 lb. flour  
 1/2 cup suet, chopped fine  
 1/2 lb. brown sugar  
 1/4 lb. large seeded raisins  
 1/4 lb. currants

2 teaspoons mixed spices  
 1 teaspoon cinnamon  
 1 teaspoon ginger  
 1/4 teaspoon salt  
 1 teaspoon baking soda  
 Enough milk to mix

Add all dry ingredients, spices and baking soda to flour. Add milk to flour gradually and mix to a dropping consistency. Tie in cloth wrung out of hot water and allow room for expansion. Boil for 3 to 4 hours or in pressure cooker 35 minutes. Serve with hard sauce or rum sauce.

## MISS HODGKIN'S PLUM DUFF (DARK)

Beat well  
 2 eggs

Blend in  
 1 cup of brown sugar  
 1/2 cup of shortening, melted  
 2 cups well-drained, cut-up pitted cooked prunes

Sift together and stir in  
 1 cup Gold Medal flour (sifted)  
 1/2 teaspoon salt  
 1 teaspoon soda

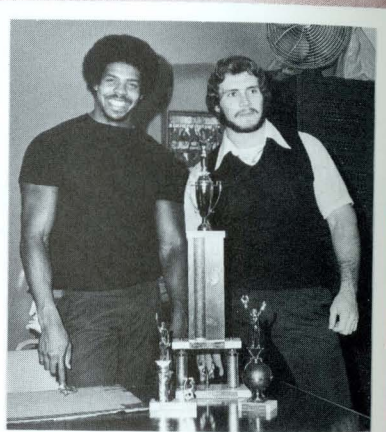
Pour into well-greased 1 qt. mold. Steam. Serve hot with cream sauce.

## CREAM SAUCE

Beat 1 egg until foamy. Blend in 1/2 cup melted butter, 1 1/2 cups sifted confectioner's sugar and 1 teaspoon vanilla. Fold in 1 cup of whipping cream, whipped stiff. Cool.



Sorry



One of the most popular courses at the Roosevelt Institute is EDP (Computer) Techniques for the Transportation Industry. Each week, instructor Gerald Walker (shown above) keeps his students in rapt attention with information now vital to industry in-house personnel. Student response to the course has been enthusiastic, and the Institute feels quite fortunate in having such an outstanding instructor as Mr. Walker who is also the Statistical Systems Manager for United States Lines, Inc. and one of the outstanding specialists in his field.

In addition, the Institute is pleased that U. S. Lines, recognizing the need for new and more training within the transportation industry has encouraged Mr. Walker in his work with the Institute.

For all of our overweight or out-of-shape readers, the two young men above should prove what a little "working out" can do.

Danny Brown (l) who works in our gymnasium when not in school recently won a second place trophy in the Mr. Staten Island (N. Y.) competition and third place in the Mr. Y.M.C.A. competition.

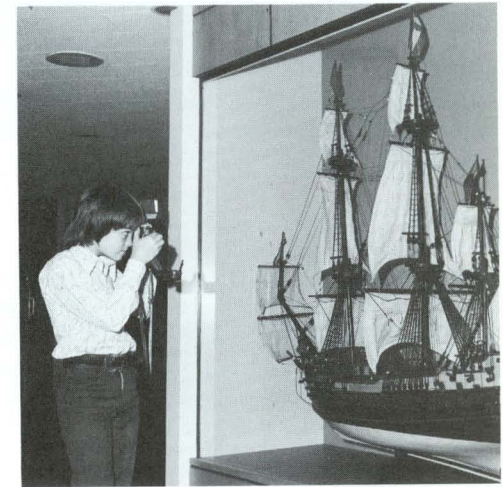
George Ludwigsen, who works for a neighboring brokerage firm, Wagner, Stott and Co. uses his lunch hour for working out. He recently won the New Jersey Arm Wrestling competition — defeating among his competition the second place winner of the recent World Championship Events.

Not bad work for a couple of young contenders.



Mrs. Helen Lange of the United Nations Association of New York introduces the panelists for this year's opening monthly seminar of Business Partners Around the Globe. Jointly sponsored by the New York Department of Commerce, International Division; the U.N.A. of New York and the Roosevelt Institute, this particular seminar on world trade opportunities featured Eastern Europe, Close-up: Russia.

Participating distinguished panelists were (from left) Admiral Tazewell T. Shepard, Vice President, Occidental International Corporation; Mr. Genadiy G. Alexeev, Director of Industrial and Technological Development for Amtorg Corporation; and Mr. J. Sotenberg, International Trade Consultant, New York State Department of Commerce, and Mrs. Lange, moderator.



Proving you're never too young to be a ship buff, teenager Arthur Wing photographs a SCI ship model for use in his upcoming social studies/art project at Benjamin Franklin Junior High School. Because he wanted to do something "special" Arthur chose his hobby, photography, as his art medium and early "sailers" as his subject.

We recently heard from his father (also named Arthur and who is with the Ecumenical Foundation for Higher Education in New York) that the results were fine.



**"Pot Luck" was the call of the day for a recent benefit luncheon given by volunteer members of the Women's Council. Board members prepared the numerous individual dishes which ranged from delicate to robust in flavor and from soup to nuts in scope. Judging from the hearty appetites, everyone must have been a gourmet cook.**



# Ship Ahoy!

by J. Norman McKenzie

I cannot say whether today's kids ever dream of running away and seeking their fortune in some far-off place. Perhaps the prevalence of motorbikes and the easy access to adventure through TV precludes such old-fashioned make-believe, but in the somber days of the Great Depression, things were otherwise. Jobs were scarce and kids had nothing to spend but time. One pleasant way to spend time was in daydreams.

If you grew up in a coastal town — as I did — you dreamed of running away to sea. There would be high adventure in foreign ports of call and, trailing clouds of glory, you would return with treasures to mollify distraught parents.

My boyhood crony, Tom Farley, and I made our dream come true, briefly, albeit we trailed no clouds of glory after our voyage, nor did we return laden with gifts. Our dream began to shape up when we helped a quartermaster of our acquaintance back aboard his ship after he had spent a liquid night on the town. The ship, *S. S. Boston*, a tanker that put in at a refinery near

our town, lay at anchor in the river, and when we helped our friend aboard, he was grateful to the point of inviting us back next trip.

Good as his word, next time she docked, he looked us up. He knew of our dream of going to sea and suggested he might get us signed on if we wanted to take our chances and hang around. "Sometimes the boys get hung-up in the city and don't make it," he told us.

We were game. We each packed a bag and spirited it out of our houses. We left no notes for our parents. We had the brilliant idea that we could have "Sparks" — as we were already calling the radio man — send radiograms to the folks back home once we were safely at sea.

Our plan was a masterpiece of simplicity. We would go aboard in the morning and hope that some of the crew were living it up so high in their city dens of iniquity that they would forget when the *Boston* sailed. We walked the four miles from our homes to the docks, and there in broad daylight we saw our ship. She was rusted and she smelled evilly of bunker oil as



During the month of September, SCI ship visitors to the New York/New Jersey Port called one or more times on 194 ships representing more than 45 countries.

At our Mariners' International Center in Port Newark, New Jersey, the soccer field was in steady use afternoons and evenings. Port Newark also had its first visit from a Russian flag vessel. Its crew members visited our center and made preliminary arrangements for a soccer match on their next trip to New Jersey.

Here at 15 State Street, the television and game room received especially heavy use as the "Mets" made their sudden bid for the pennant. Chess continued to grow in popularity with seamen although "cards" still hold their own. The weekly dances are always enjoyed and are particularly well-attended whenever the renowned band from the *SS FRANCE* performs.

great rubber pipes, like monstrous shafts stuck in some wounded giant, sucked the black cargo from her tanks. But as we mounted the gangplank, she took on the majestic look of a cruise ship. We found our quartermaster friend lazing in his bunk reading "Ballyhoo," the forerunner of today's *Mad* magazine. To our breathless question "Any berths open?" he replied sleepily, "Don't know yet — never know until the last minute. Just hang around."

We hung around. In a little while he took us into the galley where a man in a dirty apron and a stubby beard eyed us suspiciously. "They're okay — they may ship out with us," said the quartermaster. But he winked when he said it. The nagging doubt evoked by the wink was dissolved in the steaming mugs of coffee that the dirty-aproned one — called "Cook" — set before us. It was the blackest, the strongest, the coffee-est coffee I had ever tasted.

As we sat sipping that lordly brew, a blast from the ship's whistle rocked the room. Tom and I both jumped. Cook and the quartermaster laughed. "We'll be shoving off soon," said the quartermaster, consulting his watch. "I'll check — looks like those guys ain't gonna show. I'll go see about signing you boys on," and he ducked out of the galley.

My stomach turned over. I looked at Tom and saw my mood mirrored in his face. My lord! I thought; we're actually going. I was scared stiff. There was no turning back, no chance to run away to land to the safety of our homes.

But we were wrong. As we trudged topside, we spotted the quartermaster

chatting with the man on watch at the gangplank. They were laughing and pointing to the dock below. There, staggering out of a cab and scrambling up the gangplank were the two "missing" crewmen. They had turned their backs on SIN.

The terror of a few moments before now became chagrin. Sheltered from the dreadful reality of running away to sea, we had nothing left but the dream. And knowing the dream would not come true, we could now dream it safely, as long as we wanted to.

Even gladder than when we had come aboard, we said our goodbyes and, bags in hand, walked the plank. We stood on the dock while they pulled in the hawsers, and two tugs maneuvered our ship out into the channel. On the turning tide, she made her ponderous way down the river and out into the sea. We watched until we lost her in the maze of smoke stacks of the factories that lined the banks.

As we walked back to town, a cold drizzle began, chilling us beyond the chill that was already in our hearts. We stopped by the lunchroom where we had so often planned to run away to sea. We ordered coffee and as we drank, I said, "This sure tastes a lot better than the lousy stuff they serve on tankers."

Tom looked at me, nodded and said, "Yuh, lots better."

As I think about it now, I'm inclined to believe that our conversation, like the coffee, had just a touch of sour grapes in it.

## \$5 GETS THE LOOKOUT

Much as we regret it, increased operating costs have necessitated our sending the "Lookout" *only* to those contributors who give \$5.00 or more per year, effective with the January 1974 issue.

In case your 1973 contribution was less than \$5.00, just mail us the difference and we'll be sure that you continue to get our publication.

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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

CARLYLE WINDLEY  
Editor



"... and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh."



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