



We Wish
You

 Merry Christmas! 

As we prepare for the holidays and all the excitement it brings, let us not forget that this is also a time of quiet reflection... a time of thanksgiving, and a time of sharing. It goes without saying that this will not be an ordinary holiday season since this is the first Christmas without Mom. So much has happened in one year, that to even try and make sense of it all is a futile waste of time.

We will indeed miss mom's physical presence this Christmas season. However we need to remember that only the physical side of mom will not be visible. There will forever be pieces of mom in each of us and in those of her many grandchildren and great grandchildren to come, and so on. Her wonderful laugh... her simple quietness and her compassionate understanding... will at times appear to those of us who are listening. Her knowing smile, inquisitive eyes and air of peaceful contentment is visible to those of us who are looking.

How many times a day do you hear a song or see a picture or taste a favorite dish and think of mom? You can almost hear her voice in your mind and yet deep in the pit of your stomach a small ache begins to grow. It at first seems so hurtful but yet at the same time... comforting. It is indeed comforting to know those feelings are present and will for a brief moment, bring mom alive if only in our minds. Memories are wonderful.

Mom was the glue to this family; and she continues to hold us together for so much of what we do and say... we do in her regards... oftentimes without even realizing her influence. And for those of us with children... we share in that wonderful cycle which continues to spread our love and influence unto our own children.

Mom's ability to hold us all together is felt even more so during this season. Allow her love to pull us together.

We were given the opportunity to be members of a somewhat uniquely large family... quite a gift I might add. Every life must have a purpose and so every family a reason and a need fulfilled. We are truly blessed to have had those life experiences we all shared in. Let us continue to give thanks for those wonderful memories and relish life's continued blessings. Mom would be proud.

I wish to dedicate this issue to family and not just our earthly one but to an even greater extent... our place in God's heavenly family. I believe with God as our Teacher, we shall ever strive to follow His example and we will find contentment as we go about living our lives.



[A Reason for the Season](#)

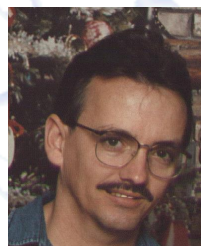
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Holiday Memories

We all have wonderful memories of Christmastime... some will always bring a glow to our hearts and minds. While preparing for this column, many of us seem to have a few of the same vivid memories . . . the silver- tinsel Christmas tree which had a revolving colored wheel was a holiday staple for many years. A few of us even recall the humming sound the motor of the color wheel made as it spun around and round. It was even recalled that the wheel had to be replaced a couple of times because the plastic melted onto the motor. Or, how about the memory of listening to the Andy William's Christmas albums or even the Tijuana Brass Holiday album. . . attending midnight mass with mom . . . or the many Christmas cards which were usually placed throughout the kitchen and dining area by mom? And of course no Christmas dinner would be complete without the Christmas tree plates that mom used. If you allow your imagination to work, surely you can smell the wood as it burns in the wood stoves and the wispy aroma of pine that came from the cut tree part which sat in the living room disguised as a Christmas Tree. You can certainly taste the fruitcake which was a tradition (one of mom's favorites).

Better yet, can't you just ache for some of mom's famous Red Christmas Cake with the butter frosting!

In that vein, here are some more of **your** contributions:



Mark Reeb: One of Mark's fondest memories was his first Kern Christmas Dinner gathering at the Therm-O-Disc hall and he remembers how good mom's coffee tasted. He claims it was the most coffee he ever drank in one sitting. He can still smell the aroma.



Shannon Kern: There were many memories that came to mind for Shannon whenever he thinks of the holidays. Some of those which were easy to recall were the many Christmas mornings when he (as a youngster) and the other boys tried (often in vain) to sneak downstairs without being caught to view their presents. Or, the competition to see who would get the esteemed privilege of passing out the gifts on Christmas morn. He remembers the real effort of each Christmas trying to find just the perfect present for mom and how he would always include a box of chocolates (one of her favorites). And of course he remembers with fondness the holiday visits by Grandma Miller and how she would always bring some gift (usually socks or gloves).



Dan Kern: "My earliest memories specific to Christmas involve the excitement of waiting to open presents on Christmas morning. I remember one time when Kerry told us that he had seen Santa and had successfully surveyed the living room and it's contents (like a military mission) . After that, he was like a God to us. We took turns trying to sneak down the stairs (which was the house on Straub Rd. w/ the pool) only to chicken out and run back to the room to tell the others that we couldn't make it, not because we were scared, but because Dad caught us or Santa was still there. The mystery of not being able to go downstairs until EXACTLY 7 AM was more of the atmosphere than Christmas. Another early memory included the annual rite of passage which featured the 2 or 3 animated cartoons that aired every year on TV: *The Grinch that Stole Christmas*, *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*, and *Frosty* -- Classics!

Some of the highlights of Christmas' past include Grandma Miller. She always visited in the afternoon and brought those portable, plastic pinball games for us. I must have gotten those for 5 consecutive years or more. Clothes were also a favorite gift of hers.



I don't recall what year it was or who received it as a present, but that old electric football game always seemed to make a resurrection at Christmas time. As did the easy-bake oven. I guess some gifts are timeless. Those are the gifts that keep on giving.

I remember a Christmas on Norris Rd. when Pat came home from college and got Dad a new snow shovel. Dad then made him go outside and use it. He showed up the night before Christmas and made all of us kids unpack his car. He had the corvette at the time, and his gifts barely fit in it. Us kids nearly had a heart attack from the prospect of Pat being home, and Santa only hours from visiting. You know how it is when you're kids, every year the stories get more embellished and the older kids become bigger legends in your eyes.

I remember the Christmas when Erin received a "Lite Brite" toy. She wanted it so bad, that's all she talked about. It must have been 1978 or so. Ask her about it - she will probably be embarrassed. I can still remember the theme song from the commercial on tv.

When I was 12, Dad bought Tim & I sleds from Uncle Bill's (before they went out of business). I still have mine and will pass it on to Charlie. Kerry bought me an ax to chop wood - I still have it also. Mike bought Tim & I Star Wars watches. I bet they would be worth big bucks now. I was thirteen when Dad bought me my first bike, up to that time I road hand-me-downs. It was a 10-speed also from Uncle Bill's. This is the bike that Tim lost in a river while riding to your house in Coshocton. Tim had lost his bike when he was hit by a car and broke his collar bone. While crawling home, his bike was stolen. What luck.

My all-time favorite Christmas memory was 1995. I asked Angie to marry me while driving to her house after opening gifts at Mom & Dad's. We were so tired from going to Midnight Mass with Mom the night before, then opening gifts at 6 AM at her house, then opening gifts at 9 AM at mom & dad's. She fell asleep on the way to her house, and I almost didn't get to pop the question. I had to take her the long way home and after we got there & I had asked her, she couldn't sleep and immediately got on the phone with all her friends. Poor thing, she couldn't sleep for days."



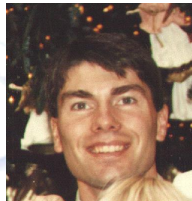


Dad: He remembers with dread the feeling that came with each Christmas Eve and having to run to the store at the last minute (usually Christmas Eve) trying to find a gift for mom. Another memory of his was the chaos which came with each Christmas eve as mom hurriedly tried to get everything done in preparation for the next morning. He remembers mom wrapping gifts until 3:00 in the morning only to have those same packages torn open in what amounted to a few hours having been placed under the tree.


Oftentimes, mom would no sooner finish placing the freshly wrapped packages under the tree and slip into bed, when the certain footsteps of children could be heard as they tried to sneak into the living room to peek at gifts and perhaps catch Santa in the act.



Kathy Mullins: One of Kathy's fond Christmas memories was... " the Christmas of 1971 when I got skis from Doug for Christmas, and I thought I was going to get an engagement ring. I had never skied. I couldn't figure out why he would get me skis? They were used skis too. He bought them from the Air Force Base thrift shop where he was stationed in Illinois at Scott Air force Base. I was so disappointed....but I still have those skis, and I learned to love skiing, and passed that love onto Joel, John, and Rita.....and, of course, I did get my ring the next year.



Dave: According to Colleen, Dave has a few vivid memories of Christmas with the Kern's: sliding down the front hill with all of the grandkids-realizing he would end up having to carry at



least one of them back up the hill with him! Also, realizing when he arrived that his chances of making it up the hill in his vehicle were slim to none-it was always a refreshing walk up the hill!

The Christmas tree that dad would always seem to find! Dave was always amused by their "Charlie Brown" appearance!



Cullen Kern: He vividly remembers the Christmas which was around his fourth grade year and the family was living at the newer house on Straub Road. He had asked (on several occasions) to have a crystal radio for Christmas and to his great surprise, mom had seen to it that he had one come Christmas morning. Kevin helped him put the crystal radio kit together. For hours, Cullen would lay on his bedroom floor with a head set on attempting to pick up a radio station from that small crystal radio (which had no batteries). This was the seed for his continued interest and love of radios... especially ham radios.

Cullen fondly also recalls the Christmas in which we all decided to establish a bank account in mom's name so she could go to Ireland. An account was created and as each holiday, birthday or special occasion came and went... we saw to it to fund mom's account. A letter was written describing the details of the account and then the letter was presented to mom one Christmas morning. Cullen remembers... " when mom read the letter, she cried... she was so happy! This was one of the few times I remembered mom crying at Christmas."

On another occasion, Cullen described a special Christmas morning that had... "Dad wheeling in two large cardboard boxes into the living room of the old farm house on Straub Road. Of course, we were wondering with great anticipation what the 2 large boxes contained. They were bigger than me at the time! Mom opened them up to discovered they contained a new washer and dryer! Boy, was she ever surprised!"





Erin Reeb: "Some of my fondest Christmas memories

are growing up in a household in which there was always people coming and going. The excitement would always start around Thanksgiving and the annual "Christmas drawing." The following weeks passed filled with anticipation and counting the days until the *Big Day*. I don't actually have any memories of all of us residing at home at the same time. I do remember though the importance of knowing who would be coming home and when they would be arriving. Awaiting the arrival of my older brothers and sisters was a big part of the excitement that surrounded the holiday. The only bad part about having more people staying at the house was that you had to plan ahead to take a shower--there was never enough hot water.



I remember Dad getting the Christmas tree. (Most years cutting off the top of the tree was all that was done). We would get the decorations out of the attic--including the same old ripped and heavily used wrapping paper that we had all been using for the previous ten years.

Mom would make Christmas cookies and placing a few decorations about the house. The Christmas cards would start coming in and she would hang them up on the kitchen wall.

I loved to play the Christmas records--my favorite was always *Andy Williams*. I continued to listen to this album even after it got the big scratch and it skipped all the time!


One of the first articles of clothing which I can remember receiving which was *brand new* was the pink coat that mom and dad gave me. I loved that coat--until Kevin Gower, a kid in my second grade class got sick and threw up all over it!

Remember Christmas morning--sneaking downstairs to see all the gifts under the tree? I always had to compete with Shannon as to which one of us would be the chosen one that would get to hand the gifts out! Mom always gave the MOST PRACTICAL gifts! Everyone always got the same thing? I remember one year Mom got Colleen and I each a pair of panty hose (tights)--blue ones. I still have mine!




From the time I was in kindergarten, I wanted a game called LITE BRITE. I asked and waited for this game to arrive every year. It finally came when I was in fifth or sixth grade. Imagine my surprise!!!

I don't know that any Christmas can ever compete with those earlier ones... I'd have to say that they were very special. Times have changed and everything is different now. My hope is that Corey will capture some of that same excitement that is shared amongst the family as it surrounds this special time of the year



Tim Kern: There have been many memories which come to mind for Tim whenever he thinks of Christmas's past... perhaps just last year's was one he won't soon forget. The stunned expression on dad's face when he had opened Tim's gift (which was a framed copy of various newspaper articles which highlighted Dad's various swimming exploits) was truly an expression that Tim will long recall.

Not that this would necessarily be a Christmas memory, but for Tim he happily recalls those winter days (usually around the Christmas holiday) in which boots, gloves and coats were lined up in the back room waiting for the rapid response maneuvering which occurred whenever the sound of someone getting stuck trying to climb the driveway. The dogs usually gave the signal that someone was approaching, followed by the whine of an engine or the screech of tires spinning... mom then sounded the alarm that help would be required which brought the troops to order as they proceeded to prepare for the rescue mission. What ensued next, Tim fondly recalls was a room full of kids desperately trying to dress themselves in an odd assortment of boots, sweaters, hats, gloves and coats of every size, shape and condition. One would be considered lucky to actually have dressed in a matching set of anything or to have an item which wasn't torn, tattered or stained. Once dressed, the troop would march down the hill in that brave attempt to muster another fool up that blasted hill.





Harold Kern: As a child, Harold recalls few memorable Christmas holidays. Money was scarce and those were much harder times. "The family had little and Dad (Grandpa Kern) was more like a Scrooge during the holiday season. He (Grandpa) didn't believe in celebrating Christmas. What celebration there was, usually was very meek."


There was a particular Christmas though which will always be a highlight in Harold's life. When he was about the age of 5 or so, he received for Christmas a pair of leather, hi-top boots which had a side pocket for a knife. He even received a knife to fit in the boot pocket. It was especially memorable to Harold because he later learned that his dad had to borrow the money (from his Uncle Gil) to buy the boots.

Few, if any presents were given during the holiday season while Harold and dad were growing up. Of course, money was never available for such luxuries. Not until Grandpa was older and married to Berneda did much attention get paid to celebrating at the holidays. Harold marvels at how much attention is paid by those of us celebrating the season these days. "Kids don't know what it is like to go without. They definitely have it a lot easier these days."

Harold mentioned how mom always impressed him at the holidays. "It seems to me that Dolores never forgot someone's Birthday and certainly always had a gift to give to everyone at the holidays." In a way... mom reminded him a lot of his own mother in that respect.



Colleen Benecke: Living on Straub Road and the quest of trying to sneak past dad to venture into the living room to see what Santa had left on Christmas morning was a memory that Colleen vividly recalls. No matter how cleverly mastered, Dad was always



quick to catch whomever attempted to "catch Santa in the act" and he would simply send the culprit back to bed.

Being the true Browns fan that she is, Colleen happily recalls the year that she received a Browns' T-shirt as a present from Andy. And what made the T-shirt even more precious was the numerals it had; number 17-- Brian Sipe's.



Andy Johnson: Certainly the holiday season held a mixed bag of emotions for Andy. There have been many joyous occasions which occurred during this blessed season. Perhaps one which comes to mind was the year many of us spent an evening at the Riva Ridge Apartment to celebrate the holiday (and watch some Football Follies on ESPN). The room was limited but the laughter was loud.

The holiday season always brought a certain anxious anticipation into the heart of Andy (and his sports minded narrowness). The Christmas season was the harbinger of the soon to follow occasion of the NFL playoffs. Unfortunately for Andy and his team, the Browns, ... the memories of those days were not of a happy note. Though many a Christmas saw the Browns bursting into the playoffs... by January... the gloom of post holiday blues ... and post playoffs depression had overtaken any and all happiness from Andy's bleak world.

How many of you remember "Red, Right, 88" ? Do you remember the Drive? Or how about the Fumble? Yes, those are the memories etched forever into Andy's mind. Many a Christmas vacation was spent in front of the TV cheering and hoping for a Championship season but that never happened. But for Andy... those memories of going to the Stadium with many of us together ... were some of the greatest moments he can share.





Twig News:

Rita Mullins had an outstanding soccer season for the Madison Rams. The team finished the season as Regional Champions. She was awarded honorable mention by the Ohio Heartland Conference Girls Soccer Association and was presented a nomination to the All-Conference Selections. Rita also received her varsity letter in soccer. Rita is currently involved in basketball. She has been selected, along with one other Madison H.S. student to participate in the Young Leaders Institute, which is sponsored through the Richland County area schools.

Joel Mullins has organized a new high school level soccer team, along with other fellow Madison players, and is registered to play in the area leagues. It is called "GREEN LIGHTENING", and they are sponsored through two small businesses.

Laura Mullins recently moved to the Columbus area and is currently working with Erin in the apartment/housing industry.

Akiko Kern is currently a senior attending Stone Mountain High School.

Adrienne Kern is playing power forward for the Stone Mountain JV Basketball team.

Matt Kern is in the second grade. He is enjoying having his little brother, Christopher around.

Lindsey Johnson is keeping busy with her competitive gymnastics. This is Lindsey's 3 year on the team.



Allison Kern is in her second year of college at the University of South Carolina. She is majoring in International Business. Currently she has secured a job with the Lerner's Store.

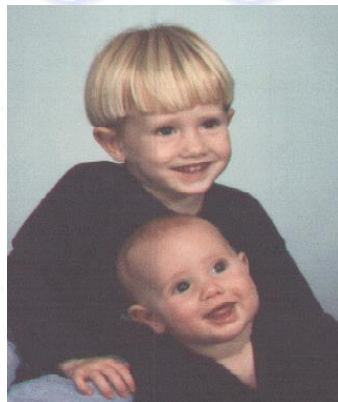
Josh Kern is keeping busy with Intramural basketball as he prepares for the baseball season. This is Josh's junior year of high school at Huston H.S..

Mason Kern is in the third grade. He is active on the Colliersville Spurs' basketball team. Pat is the team's coach.

We're still waiting to hear about your children (Twigs). Don't forget to send your news.



The Photo Gallery



Ryan & Kyle Benecke



Charles Kern



Corey Reeb



Emily Johnson



Days of Remembrance

- Dec. 1 - Doug Mullins celebrates his birthday*
- Dec. 2 - Kathy Mullins celebrates her birthday*
- Dec. 3 - Maria Kern will celebrate her 15th birthday*
- Dec. 7 - Kerry Kern celebrates his birthday*
- Dec. 14 - Grandma Miller would have celebrated her 89th birthday*
- Dec. 28 - Pat & Kathy Kern will celebrate their 24th Wedding Anniversary*
- Dec. 29 - Tim and Dan Kern celebrate their 31st birthday*
- Jan. 1 - Shannon Kern celebrates his birthday*
- Jan. 3 - Aunt Jean celebrates her birthday*
- Jan. 29 - Rita and John Mullins celebrate their 16th birthday*





Happy Holidays



Hark...


Do you have some holiday news to share? What will you and your family be doing over the holiday season? Taking any trips? Let us know and we will add your plans to the page.

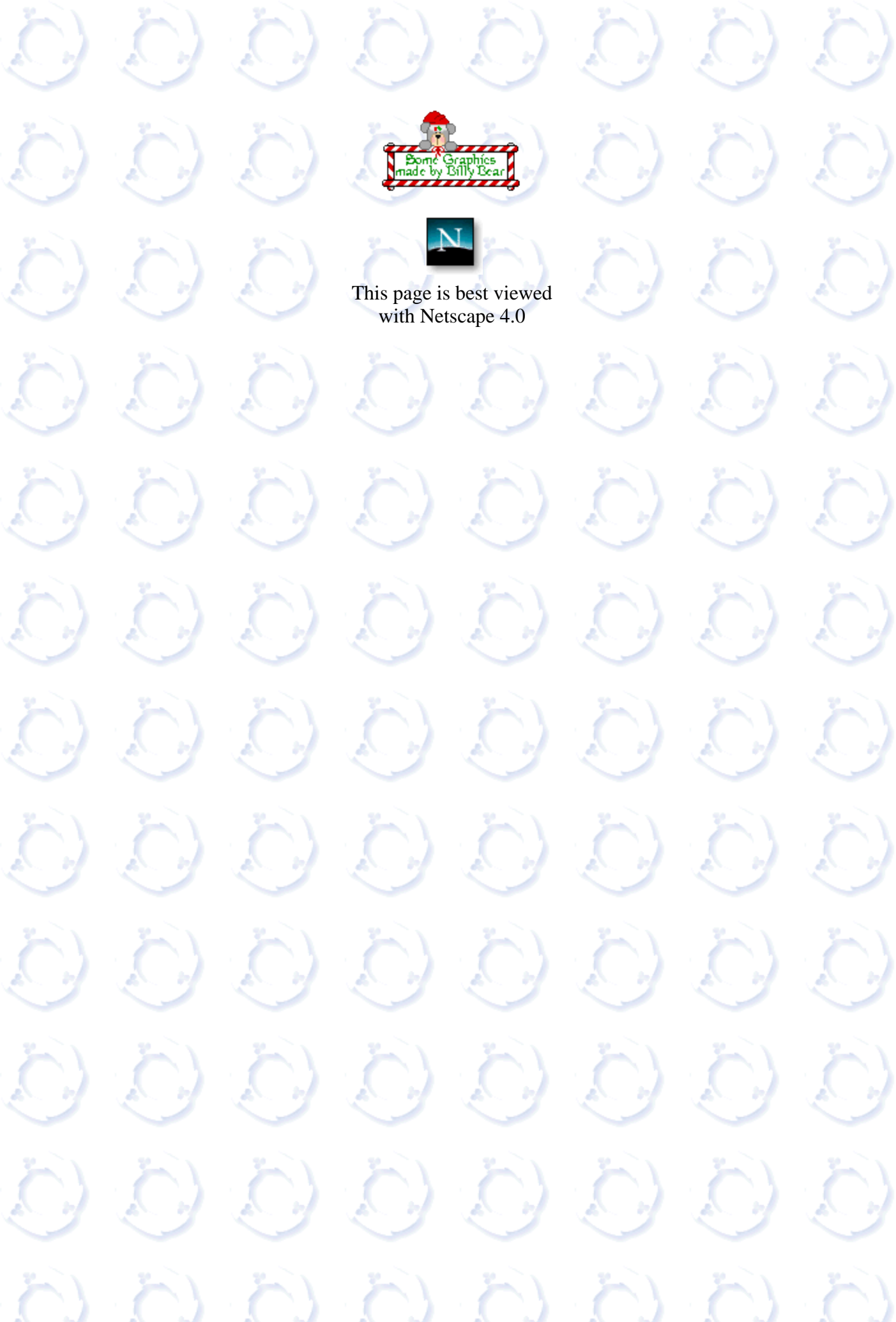


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