

Welcome to the (late) Christmas edition of "Getting to Know Your Friends"

Note from Carla - *I never take the time to do these type of things...but since I am forcing myself to "take time off for me" this week (translation: spending lots of time in my pjs watching movies, reading books, not leaving the house, well...trying not to....etc) I thought this would be fun to do! Thanks Jen for inspiring me to reminisce - I now have a page to print off and put in a scrapbook....something else I rarely do!*

Okay, here's what you're supposed to do, and try not to be a SCROOGE!!! Just copy (not forward) this entire email and paste into a new e-mail that you can send. Change all the answers so that they apply to you. Then send this to a whole bunch of people you know, INCLUDING the person that sent it to you..... Tis the Season to be NICE!

- 1. Wrapping paper or gift bags?** Hmm...depends on the size of the gift and how much time I have!
- 2. Real tree or Artificial?** Unfortunately, artificial! After years of wondering why my several of my kids would be stuffy-nosed and red-eyed at Christmas, it finally dawned on me - they are allergic to PINE!! So we have a pre-lit (best invention ever!) tree and everyone stays snuffle-free! And the only "red-eye" is from the camera flash!
- 3. When do you put up the tree?** Typically, the Saturday after Thanksgiving....unless we have just moved and all the Christmas decorations are in storage!
- 4. When do you take the tree down?** Not until after the 6th of January - unless I just can't "take it anymore"....my decorating style is "elegant clutter" and even has a tendency to get on my visual nerves! And then there's the hubby who likes the minimalist approach to decorating....
- 5. Do you like egg nog?** Not really....more of a hot chocolate person with flavored creamers added! Yum! My kids LOVE eggnog though I can't say that I have tried more than a sip. I'm with my friend Jen on this one - the name has always made me stay away....and gag.
- 6. Favorite gift received as a child?** A toss up - between my Mrs. Beasley doll, my Dancerina doll, my Easy Bake Oven (in the 60's Avocado Green thank you!), my Crissy Doll, and my Easy-Show Movie Projector (which may explain my fascination with film strips). And funny how at times I have looked like each of these dolls - Dancerina in my teens & twenties, Crissy in my thirties (when I went "red" for awhile and couldn't decide on what length my hair should be) and don't you think I now look like Mrs. Beasley? Too funny! I guess I should have played with Barbies more!



7. **Do you have a nativity scene?** Yes - several and still adding...I want to display one in every room at Christmas time.

8. **Hardest person to buy for?** Jacob. He has most "toys" for a guy his age (everything electronic, musical, & drive-able). I asked him what he'd like this year and his quick answer was "cash". Spoken like a true 18 year old.

9. **Easiest person to buy for?** Justin - books & Jaguar "anything" - too easy!

10. **Mail or email Christmas cards?** Mail - although they were very few and very late this year! I am blaming everything I can on the move! (we'll see how long I can milk this!) I have attached our annual Christmas letter just in case you weren't part of the chosen mailed few this year! Sorry, blame it on the move! ;-)

11. **Worst Christmas gift you ever received?** Other than a trip to the ER on Christmas afternoon or other places I have had to "visit" on Christmas Day - can't think of any....well, let's just not go there...this is suppose to be nice & sweet, right? Moving on....

12. Favorite Christmas movie? Oh so many...I am a Christmas movie junkie! But those who know me well know that my all time favorite Christmas movie, that I watch over and over again, is "A Christmas Story". I think TBS started playing it for 24 hours on Christmas Eve/Day just for me! We all can quote lines from it - and then there's the "Leg Lamp"! I have my very own now - miniature (thank goodness) Leg Lamp ornament from my friend Robin - sent to me all the way from Hawaii! My other favorites are "It's a Wonderful Life", "You've Got Mail" (I consider it a Christmas movie!), "Eloise at Christmas" (I want to live in the Plaza Hotel or be a nanny or both!), "A Mom for Christmas" (an 80's oldie with Olivia Newton John) and a real oldie from my childhood "A House without a Christmas Tree".

13. When do you start shopping for Christmas? After Christmas - if there's any money left! Of course then there is the issue of remembering where I put what I buy that early - I have been known to "lose" a few gifts during the year!

14. Have you ever recycled a Christmas present? Absolutely! In my family, it was common place - especially with the "dusting powder/stinky cologne" sets....just had to remember what great aunt gave it to you in front of the other great aunts/cousins...so you could "re-gift" the next year. We did have one set - Tigress, I think, with the leopard print & furry caps - that made its way back to the original gifter. Not good.

15. Favorite thing to eat at Christmas? Can't think of a favorite - other than all the sweet treats! We eat Chinese on New Years Eve as a tradition.

16. Clear lights or colored on the tree? Clear on the living room tree - the others have colored.

17. Favorite Christmas song? O Holy Night

19. Can you name all of Santa's reindeers? You know Dasher and Dancer and Prancer and Vixen, Comet and Cupid and Donner and Blitzen but do you recall the most famous reindeer of all - Rudolph! I had the Gene Autry & Burl Ives Christmas album when I was a child - another Christmas favorite!

20. Angel on the tree top or a star? Star

21. Open the presents Christmas Eve or morning? Morning - we tried the Christmas Eve opening thing one year - made Christmas morning very boring for us - everyone slept in! Although when the kids were little, they always opened one gift on Christmas Eve (pre-selected by mom) and wouldn't you know, it was new pajamas!

22. Most annoying thing about this time of year? Well, besides the fact that everyone seems to want it to end at the stroke of midnight Christmas night...people, the Twelve Days of Christmas BEGIN on the 26th! I love Christmas and all its rituals and traditions...but for me the thing that is hard/annoying right now is this "transition phase" we are in....no little people! Let me tell you, it is not much fun with just a bunch of "grown-ups"! No gingerbread houses to make, no list/letters to Santa, no Christmas church musicals to rehearse for & attend, no cookies to leave out for Santa, no Reindeer food to make, no Santa's footprints through the house, no Nutcracker shows to dress up for and attend (or spending endless hours of running to practices for!), no nights in the car looking at Christmas lights (W-o....! - family joke here), no Cracker Barrel breakfasts followed by Dollar Store shopping for siblings (a former Calvert tradition), no pictures with Santa, no Christmas parties for kids (although I did host my own tea for little girls this year!), no reading the Christmas story (the REAL one - from the book of Luke - not the one about the Red Rider BB Gun!) on Christmas Eve!

I need little kids - ahem....GRANDKIDS. Yep, I said it. I think I am ready.....

Oh, Liz darling..... :-)

And yes, to all my friends with little kids, I did the Santa thing (Rick never liked it, I'll admit) and so far no lasting harm done to my kids or their faith in God (or me)...I guess that annoys me too. A little childhood imagination & wonderment can smooth over the rough patches of life....maybe that's why I love this time of year so. The sparkle & twinkle (dare I say "magic") of Christmas can brighten up the reality of the daily grind....and bring us home to everything true: family - friends - hope - love - with Jesus at the center of it all.

23. Favorite ornament or color theme? Burgundy & gold for the living room tree. I tried to change it this year but my kids wouldn't hear of it. Guess I am stuck with it forever - which is okay by me. It's just one tree - we usually have several. And have had as many as five or six - and they each have different colors/themes. (told you - I am an over the top Christmas nut)

24. Favorite for Christmas dinner? Turkey! We duplicate Thanksgiving dinner for some reason! This year we tried ham. It just wasn't the same....

25. Favorite Christmas memory? So many to choose from (comes from being old!) but I would say the favorite would be bringing Jacob home from the hospital on Christmas Eve Eve, as we call it (Dec 23rd). He was born on Oct 28th but spent weeks in the NICU due to the fact that he was 26 weeks at birth - weighing in at 2lb 10ozs! Jacksonville was experiencing a very cold Christmas (it snowed!) and the roads/bridges were to be iced over by Christmas Eve/morning. The doctors knew we would want to be with him on Christmas Day so they decided to release him early. He weighed a whopping 3 & 1/2 lbs! He was (and still is) my little miracle.

26. What do you want for Christmas this year? Didn't really want anything and since it is already over, I'll just say that this was not the best Christmas for us. Rick is in Arizona - it is never a good thing to be apart at Christmas. Liz & Matt weren't here - although she did

get to spend two days with us later in the week...and again, moving and other circumstances just made everything a little different for us this year. All I ever want at Christmas is for our family to be together. As the kids grow up and move on with their lives, any year that it does happen will be so very precious. It goes so fast.

And...well, since you've asked...that Christmas Story Monopoly game looks pretty cool....I mean if moms are suppose to actually want something for Christmas....

27. Who is most likely to respond to this? Rick. He'll wonder why in the world I am doing this! And some of my over forty plus friends who will wonder where I got the pictures of the childhood toys! No, I don't still have them...I found them here

<http://www.feelingretro.com/toys/index.html>

If you were a child of the 60's & 70's, take a look and stroll down memory lane.

This has been fun! Hope to hear from many of you!

Blessings,
~Carla