



Collector's Club

SINCE 1992

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2008

Happy New Year!

Christmas has come and gone. Retirements have been announced (no surprises there). The new line-up has been posted on the D56 website (two weeks after it leaked to all the Department 56 collectors' groups.) 2008 is on the calendars. So another year of waiting impatiently for the new releases begins. We should all be used to it by now. The designs are announced in December. By March we are in a swivet of frustration because we have yet to see an actual building. We don't need more. Most of us need less! But we still can't wait until the new releases are in the stores.

This year's offerings for Snow Village seem modest compared to years past. (Unless you add the three new Halloween buildings which bring the list right back up to the average.) We could even skip a few, since they are remakes of older buildings. (Yeah, like that's going to happen.) Among the releases are a second winery, a new day care center, and a new cheesy motel.... Problem: this cheesy motel is even cheesier than the old

Honeymoon, and is a definite must-have. It's probably time for a second day care center. Snow Village has gone from village to small town to big town and mothers are probably having to work. Property costs have soared. Luckily, there are plenty of jobs available. Winery? I shrug...however there is a new occupant for the trailer park that's also a must-have.

Then we have the add-ons to series that we are already involved with. The Scarecrow Harvest Festival HAS to go with last year's pumpkin building which HAD to go with the previous year's apple building. It's a vicious

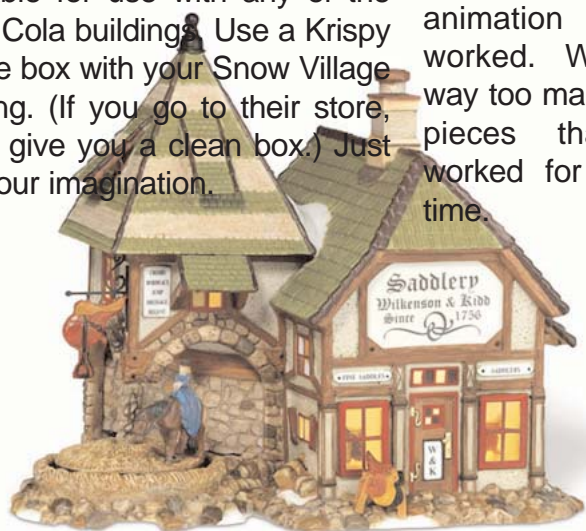
circle. And equally vicious is the pretty little Gingerbread House that goes in Christmas Lane. Christmas Lane? It's more like Christmas Highway...it goes on and on and on. So once again, out of room and out of funds, we shall put our names on the lists at Parsons and dutifully drive over and pick up our buildings. They will sit on the dining room table (or rather, on the table in what was once a dining room) while we cudgel our brains for a new spot to fill with village. Then one morning I'll wake up and find that my poor little corner classroom is gone or the dresser is missing from the guest room and shelves/tables/a show case are under construction. Once again we'll have room for one more year.



Play-Doh Water Tower

There are always some great tips in the Village D'Lights. I stumbled into this one while just admiring some display pictures. This is from J. Michael Sanders who is a regular contributor to the magazine. He took an HO scale water tower from his local train store and used the base as his water tower base. The tank is a Play-Doh tub. You might want to acquire your base first and then hit the Play-Doh aisle because there are numerous tub sizes. He emptied out the tub and put in a three-volt mini light to light it from inside. Perfect with your North Pole Play-Doh Factory!

There are lots of licensed pieces that could benefit from the use of actual products to make quick, effective vignettes. Our grandson, Gerrit had a blast creating a display using just Legos and the Lego building. The Crayola Building is another natural for product use. North Pole isn't the only village where this type of whimsy can be used. Coke products are readily available for use with any of the Coca Cola buildings. Use a Krispy Kreme box with your Snow Village building. (If you go to their store, they'll give you a clean box.) Just use your imagination.



Crazy Costs

As the new Department 56 village pieces continue their steady climb skyward, we see the prices within the secondary market falling and falling. I'm still watching for the few elusive first pieces that have always been well out of our reach. An old Mission Church sold on Ebay for just over \$500 the other day. If the prices continue to drop like that, I may even manage to own one.

You may also notice, on the new pieces, that the Canadian and American suggested retail prices are once again the same. I'm happy for our Canadian friends but I wonder if it's because their dollar has strengthened or because ours has weakened.

I did notice that the new pieces have escalated in price. It's hard to find anything as low as \$75.00 and every village has pieces well over \$100. There's more and more detail and more and more animation for more and more money. I wouldn't mind if the animation actually worked. We have way too many pricey pieces that only worked for a short time.

Fortunoff Too

Another exclusive is the Ferrara Bakery for Christmas in the City. It can only be found at Fortunoff. \$85 plus shipping and probably tax, and it can be yours. It's a nice traditional tall brick with fire escapes on the side and topiaries out front.



The Crazy Christmas House

We were gifted twice this year with notes from a secret admirer who has dubbed our over-lit home the "Crazy Christmas House". The first was a charming, hand drawn view of a part of the yard. The second was a sweet card from the

artist's whole family. (We guess he/she is elementary school age.) There were several children's names on the card so we aren't sure who the biggest fan is. I just wish they would come to the door. We'd love to give them the grand tour. Only you, our dear friends, know just what a Crazy Christmas House this is!

New Years Traditions

As I prepared the yearly New Year's Day meal of black eyed peas and collard greens, our granddaughter Emily asked why we ate the stuff every year. We gave her a sort of garbled version of the reasoning behind it. I had already mentioned the tradition in passing to my Yahoo group. I got some surprising responses and have managed to piece together a better answer for Emily. Our meal is a very Southern tradition, coming strictly from Billy's family. Our menu is set, but there are lots of variations within the Southern states.

We eat collard greens (for money, or dollars if you prefer), pork for health, black eyed peas...well, Billy says prosperity, tradition says coins. We have to have cornbread. We don't eat rice although that's another part of the Southern meal. Billy puts vinegar on his greens. He claims it keeps them from being bitter but again tradition says that it keeps the year from being too sweet. Reminds you that everything won't be perfect.

In Germany and the Scandanavian countries they substitute carrots and cabbage for the peas and greens. Many of my on-line friends mentioned cole slaw or sauerkraut with roast pork. One very surprising answer came from a Chicagoan. She said that the poor farmers in her area ate creamed dried beef on toast. Of course, that set us off on a whole other tangent.

What it finally came to was the fact that those of us from Western European traditions ate pork, leafy greens, and peas or carrots in some form or other. I was surprised to find that none of these are English tradi-

tions. I tend to assume that most of our holiday rituals are based on those from the United Kingdom. Learn something new every day!

Boscovs?

The name was new to me so I went on line to see why Snow Village has a tavern coming out that will be exclusive to Boscovs for the upcoming year. I am assuming that means it will be an early release although that's not how they announced it. It seems that Boscovs is an East coast department store that has been family owned since 1921. I still don't know where their physical stores are since they neglected to mention that, but I do know that they listed some D56 village on their website, along with Hummel and Jim Shore.

The Yuengling Tavern picture was not available and Boscovs made no mention of it. I guess they'll post it when it comes into their stores. I did find it in the Village D'Lights current

issue. It reminds me of the Lighthouse Restaurant from several years ago, although the lighthouse has been replaced by a beer can. Apparently Yuengling Lager is well known in Pottsville, PA. Yuengling is America's oldest continually operating brewery and there was a note that although "not a great beer, it is a good swilling beer for middle America". Hmmm. Limited to 1000 pieces, it's a nicely detailed piece.



From the Editor's

Desk...

My New Year wish for all of you is that 2008 be many times better than 2007. I know that it has been a rough year for many of us. There are plenty of stories that weren't shared as well as the ones we knew about. It was a year of financial uncertainty for a lot of us, for some spectacular health issues, for irretrievable losses, but life goes on. I'm thankful to be able to call you my friends. I'm thankful for other friends across the country and around the world that Department 56 has brought me. I'm saddened to see people lose interest in the villages because they are so much more than "household décor". They are bridges; bridges to the past where our Christmas memories still shine,

bridges to link us to other collectors, and bridges into the future. Maybe your children and grandchildren are like mine. They just shrug the buildings off as more of Gramma and Grampy's craziness. One day we'll be gone and they'll pick up a building and say, "Remember the elaborate displays that..." And it will all be worthwhile.

I'm happy to see the occasional young family choosing pieces for their own collections. They are still out there...the greenhorns...buying just one or two for a Christmas display. As long as they are still buying, there will still be pieces to buy. And that's a good thing. Happy New Year!

Lynn

The 12 Days of Christmas D56 Style

On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me:

A New Krinkles Topper for my tree.

On the second day of Christmas my true love gave to me:

Two Snowman Houses,

And a new Krinkles topper for my tree.

On the third day of Christmas my true love gave to me:

Three Windsor Castles,

Two Snowman Houses,

And a new Krinkles topper for my tree.

On the fourth day of Christmas my true love gave to me:

Four Santa's Beacons.

Three Windsor Castles,

Two Snowman Houses,

And a new Krinkles topper for my tree.

On the fifth day of Christmas my true love gave to me:

Five Light Nouveaus...

Four Santa's Beacons,

Three Windsor Castles,

Two Snowman Houses,

And a new Krinkles topper for my tree.

On the sixth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me:

Six Sharkey's Pool Halls,

Five Light Nouveaus...

Four Santa's Beacons,

Three Windsor Castles,

Two Snowman Houses,

And a new Krinkles topper for my tree.

On the seventh day of Christmas my true love gave to me:

Seven Candy Cane Corners,

Six Sharkey's Pool Halls,

Five Light Nouveaus...

Four Santa's Beacons

Three Windsor Castles,

Two Snowman Houses,

And a new Krinkles topper for my tree.

On the eighth day of Christmas my true love gave to me:

Eight Pine Creek Lodges,

Seven Candy Cane Corners,

Six Sharkey's Pool Halls

Five Light Nouveaus...

Four Santa's Beacons,

Three Windsor Castles,

Two Snowman Houses,

And a new Krinkles topper for my tree.

On the ninth day of Christmas my true love gave to me:

Nine Mayor's Mansions,

Eight Pine Creek Lodges,

Seven Candy Cane Corners,

Six Sharkey's Pool Halls,

Five Light Nouveaus...

Four Santa's Beacons,

Three Windsor Castles,

Two Snowman Houses,

And a new Krinkles topper for my tree.

On the tenth day of Christmas my true love gave to me:

Ten Flatiron Buildings,

Nine Mayor's Mansions,

Eight Pine Creek Lodges,

Seven Candy Cane Corners,

Six Sharkey's Pool Halls,

Five Light Nouveaus...

Four Santa's Beacons,

Three Windsor Castles,

Two Snowman Houses,

And a new Krinkles topper for my tree.

On the eleventh day of Christmas my true love gave to me,

Eleven Twirling Teacups,

Ten Flatiron Buildings,

Nine Mayor's Mansions,

Eight Pine Creek Lodges,

Seven Candy Cane Corners,

Six Sharkey's Pool Halls,

Five Light Nouveaus...

Four Santa's Beacons,

Three Windsor Castles,

Two Snowman Houses,

And a new Krinkles topper for my tree.

On the twelfth day of Christmas my true love gave to me:

Twelve Nascar Cafes,

Eleven Twirling Teacups,

Ten Flatiron Buildings,

Nine Mayor's Mansions,

Eight Pine Creek Lodges,

Seven Candy Cane Corners,

Six Sharkey's Pool Halls,

Five Light Nouveaus...

Four Santa's Beacons,

Three Windsor Castles,

Two Snowman Houses,

And a new Krinkles topper for my tree.

That's over \$16,000!!! (give or take a few because I didn't use a calculator). Now I know he loves D56, but really.... Anybody need a Krinkles tree topper? I've got twelve.

Christmas Shopping Report

Oh, it was a tough one. If you wanted Department 56 village, you had to search long and hard. Lucky for us we have Parsons. Other venues were scarce as hen's teeth around us. Parisian sold out to Belk. Belk carries a different village. Chattahoochee General Store opened their Christmas shop without a single village piece. They were my first Atlanta dealer and I was saddened by the loss. Rumor had it that Macy's carried a little bit. I didn't see any but I didn't search. Macy's is the Pepsi of department stores in my Coca Cola world.

Even our beloved Chamberhouse had cut way back on ordering. We managed to get our Snow Village fix but the cost in gasoline was embarrassing.

Krinkles? Well that's another story. Last year we scrapped for Krinkles. This year there was a plethora (but I still managed to buy duplicates...uuurgghh). We found Krinkles in almost as many places as Webkinz....well, no, but we found several charming small stores in our area that had beau coupe de Krinkles. Strangely, each had a different selection and each had a LOT. Once again, D56 is flooding the market with too many choices in the hopes that someone will want them all (me). I may want them all, but I'm not doing that. They're just too hard to display. All those fuzzy, fussy feathers attract

dust like crazy. The pieces are extremely fragile, little arms and legs break off if you (or some clutzy 13 year old) look at them. The glittery bits can't be cleaned...I love them but I'm expecting to get up one morning to find them all boxed up in favor of room for more village.

Village RPG

I got to thinking (I know...sigh...) Role Play Games are very popular on the internet these days. (That's the rpg part.) Players become a character and interact with other player/characters in a creative writing frenzy. A village setting would be perfect for role playing. There's no telling what story lines could come out of the villages. Halloween would really be fun. People could take the parts of the Grimsly family members, Madame Zorah, Dr Lunatic, Zelda, or they could make up their own character. They could get up to all kinds of virtual mischief.

You could have a site for Dickens story lines or one for Big City 30s. The places have been created, all you'd have to do is people them. It could be a whole new on line industry. Of course there are a few drawbacks. Who ever set it up would have to be extremely computer savvy. There would have to be some major computer graphics involved. It would have to be closely monitored (ooogh, some of the stuff that's out there!). Sponsors would be needed...but it's fun to think about.

January Meeting!!

The January meeting has been an on again/off again thing for some time. Many of us have been plagued with health issues but hopefully we have at least enough healthy members to put a meeting together. Don't bother to raise your hand if you've had the respiratory cold/flu thing. I think that would be a complete head-count of club members.

As of this morning (January 3) these are the plans:

January 12, 1:00 PM at John and Marlene's to view their fabulous new North Pole display, then upward and onward to Melanie's where we will have snacks and a short meeting. Better eat lunch beforehand and bring regular snack-type food to share because it may be late before we eat anything. Most of us have been to John and Marlene's but their address is: **4620 Dudley Lane, Atlanta. 30327, just in case. Phone: 404-255-9519**

Don't forget, the open house is still on at the Jaquiths' for January 6 (which is Belinda's Birthday!!). That's TWO different get-togethers. Donna and Terry live at:

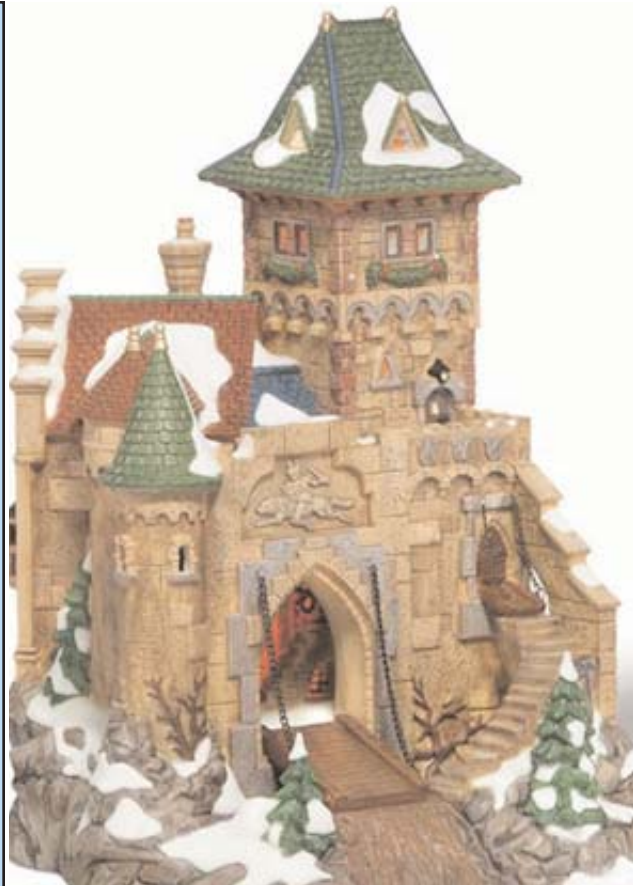
2090 Hemrick Rd in Cumming, 30041 if you need to Mapquest. Their phone is 678-513-7322. You will need to bring food to share and a white elephant gift to exchange.

News from the NCC

By now I'm sure you have heard that the NCC is hosting their own gathering in Bloomington, MN. It will be held at the Mall of America Ramada Inn in June of this year. The host hotel is full but there is a back-up hotel. Unlike most gatherings, many of the seminars will be hosted by Department 56's own artists. Others will use a panel of experts so you can get more than one point of view.

There will also be a "Meet and Greet" for those who would like to be up close and personal with the D56 artists. The MOA D56 store will have "late night" shopping for attendees, plus lots of other special activities.

The NCC has announced their three (THREE!!) special event pieces. One is a North Pole accessory, one for Dickens and one for Snow Village. All have the theme "Home to Department 56". These pieces must be preordered when you order your event tickets. Go to www.ncc2008convention.com for all the details.



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Check with Marlene to see when your dues need renewing...you don't want to miss a minute!

