

COLLECTOR'S COURIER

AT HOME WITH CLARA JOHNSON SCROGGINS:
Decorating With the Ultimate Ornament Collector



Every guest who enters Clara Johnson Scroggins' home at Christmastime is greeted by the magnificent sight of a ten-foot tree covered with Keepsake Ornaments. But Clara doesn't feel the tree is hers alone. "I keep a basket of ornaments and a basket of hooks under the tree so that anyone who comes through my door gets to hang an ornament on the tree," she says.

Sharing the joy of ornament collecting has become Clara's profession as well as her passion. She is said to have the world's largest array of tree ornaments, with the number reaching well over 200,000.

Living with favorites from her collection brings special pleasure at Christmastime, but Clara displays several special groups of Keepsake Ornaments throughout the year. "I keep a complete set of the 'open house' ornaments and all of the Club ornaments in cases," Clara says. "I also keep the 'Tiny Tea Party,' 'Sew, Sew Tiny,' and 'Tiny Green Thumbs' in shadowbox displays in the kitchen." Clara's Merry Miniatures display changes with the

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seasons, creating an ever-changing celebration throughout the year.

But it's obvious that Christmas is an especially joyful time for Clara, and moving to the sunny state of Florida hasn't changed her approach to the season. "Everybody decorates—no matter where you are," she says.

Because of her love of family, Clara's favorite Christmas display is one she calls the "family wreath" (see photo below). "It's an idea I got from my friend and fellow collector, Eileen Hanson," she explains. "Over my fireplace in the family room I have a 48-inch wreath that is filled completely with ornaments that represent my family." There are "Baby's First Christmas" ornaments, grandson and granddaughter ornaments, husband ornaments, mother ornaments—all commemorative designs representing years and events that are special to the family. "My oldest granddaughter and her husband recently built a new home, so I have the 1993 'New Home' key ornament on the wreath this year," Clara says.

When asked what decorating advice she would give to other collectors, Clara suggested that others try creating a family-oriented wreath. "The family ornaments can get lost on your main tree," Clara says. "Putting the ornaments on a special wreath really personalizes your display."

Just for fun, Clara enjoys buying multiple ornaments to use in clever displays like a big bunch of 1990 "Feliz Navidad" red peppers (see photo above) or a bushel basket of "Two Peas in a Pod." "If you like something, go with it," she advises. "You're not restricted to hanging the ornaments on trees and wreaths. I hang them on guest towels and use them as place cards for guests," she says. "I put cookie ornaments on plates and ornaments that look like candy in crystal dishes. I simply like living with them—wherever they are."



YULE TIDINGS

It's an odd feeling to sit down and write a column for a *Courier* issue that is sure to be upstaged by what we've inserted with it! I am guessing that by now you have looked through your 1994 *Dream Book* at least once. Don't you just love the new designs? I think there will be some new favorites "born" this year!

As you, your family, and collector friends get together to compare notes, oohhs and aahhs, and try to figure out which of the Keepsake Ornaments will make their way to your trees and collections, please remember that we create our line with your enjoyment in mind. It is our greatest hope that the Keepsake Ornaments you purchase will become a part of your special holiday traditions and family memories.

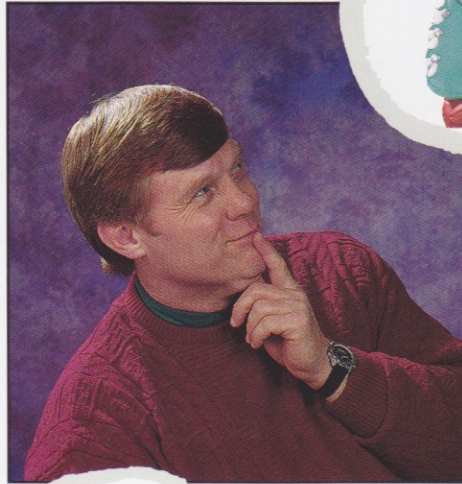
Collecting Keepsake Ornaments is a wonderful, fun thing to do. But sometimes, there is a lot of what we call "chatter" out there amongst collectors. As you listen to and read what other collectors tell you, always remember that the best way to build a meaningful collection is to purchase those designs that appeal to you. A collection built in this way is sure to mean something very special to your family for many, many years to come.

Enjoy,

Rachel S. Perkal

WHERE DO THEY GET THOSE GREAT IDEAS?

One of the questions collectors ask most often is—where do the Keepsakes artists get all those wonderful ideas for ornaments? This question has several answers. Some designs reflect the artist's own experiences. Other designs are the result of taking a new look at the ways we celebrate the holidays. Here are a few of our favorite stories behind the 1994 Keepsake Ornaments. We hope you enjoy hearing them as much as we have!



John Francis, who grew up in Wyoming, recalls hearing about jackalopes from his father. "The story was that those little creatures could run so fast, you hardly ever saw them. Dad would say, 'Look, there's one — oh, you just missed him!'" Fortunately for John and his friends, and any newcomers, there were plenty of pictures and numerous "trophies" of the legendary jackrabbit with the antlers of an antelope. The 1994 Keepsake Ornament depicts a "duded up" jackalope, ready to dash off to a holiday party.



When Linda Sickman envisioned a whimsical new hero for the Christmas season, she imagined that his name would be "Angel Hare" — in honor of the wispy, white decorations draped on Christmas trees years ago. And sure enough, her 1994 ornament features "AH" flying in to decorate your tree with an armful of fluffy white strands, reminiscent of old-fashioned angel hair. "You can tell that our hero really means well, but he hasn't quite gotten his act together yet," Linda chuckles. "Notice the way his shiny halo is tipped down over one ear."

"I remember the first time I saw 'Barney,'" recalls Dill Rhodus. "When my daughter was between two and three years old, we had a morning ritual. She would climb up in my lap and eat her cereal, and we would watch television together. One morning a wonderful purple dinosaur came on, and she immediately fell in love with him." Dill explains that his daughter loves Barney™ "because he is always so happy. What I like about Barney is that he teaches children important little lessons about life, in an entertaining way."



Sometimes Keepsakes artists have design ideas that can only be developed with a little help from their friends. Patricia Andrews wanted to design an ornament reflecting the activities of African-Americans at Christmastime. "I wanted to base the design on a real person," says Patricia. "I knew that Lynetta White, who is on the Collector's Club staff, is very active in her church. So I asked her whether she might have a daughter or niece that I could use as a model," the artist continues. "Lynetta was wonderful! She brought in some portraits of her beautiful niece, Rebecca Gilmore, and I was able to work from them and create just the design I had in mind."

SKETCHBOOK

Jack Benson Keeps Amazing Things Happening in the Keepsakes Studio



Keepsakes Studio Manager Jack Benson hops aboard one of his antique motorcycles, complete with sidecar and special friend.

Jack Benson caught the collecting fever from his grandmother. Together they scoured the New England countryside searching for treasures. “She called it junk snuppin’,” he fondly remembers.

Benson has traveled a long way from those early junk-snuppin’ days. Still an avid collector of everything from antique motorcycles to stained glass and jukeboxes, he brings a collector’s perspective to his role as Keepsakes Studio Manager.

“I think I understand the collector, that ‘I gotta have it’ mentality,” says Benson. “My house is full of stuff.”

Part of the attraction of all that “stuff” is the essence of its design. That careful eye for design and his talent as a writer brought Benson to Hallmark 21 years ago. After stops in Contemporary Design, the Humor Group, SHOEBOX, and Ambassador, he joined the Keepsakes staff in January 1993.

“It’s fascinating to watch the talent of

“I think I understand the collector, that ‘I gotta have it’ mentality,” says Benson. “My house is full of stuff.”

the artists here, who take a blob of sculpting clay to a finished piece with such speed,” he says. “And they create designs keeping in mind the molding considerations which requires an incredible amount of technical knowledge. It’s absolutely amazing.”

To keep amazing things happening, Benson looks for ways to make sure the studio is a place where creativity comes

first. When time permits, he arranges opportunities for the artists to explore other art forms such as movies, puppetry, or pottery.

“Creative renewal is an individual effort, because each artist has something different that brings out that energy,” he says. “One of the biggest challenges is finding enough time to keep that creative excitement going within the production schedule.”

Benson believes his job is to “allow creative people to do what they do best” so that Keepsake Ornament collectors can enjoy the delightful results.

“It’s wonderful to go from Christmas trees that were just decorated with balls and lights to trees that are so individualized and themed,” he says. “Today, each tree is filled with memories. It’s really neat.”

Editor's Note: During an Artist's Appearance in Munster, Indiana, a young collector named Cameron Kelly-Johnson approached Rachel Perkal, Collector's Club Manager, with an idea: Why not feature "kid collectors" sometimes? Thus, The Young Collector's Corner was born.

You may have noticed, as we have, the faces of some collectors are looking younger and younger these days. If you know of other young collectors with special stories to tell, have them drop us a note so we can share their stories with other Club members.

To pay tribute to the originator of the idea, we thought it only proper to give Cameron the honor of naming the column and of spotlighting him in this issue.

For the Kelly-Johnson family, collecting is a family affair. Cameron, the youngest collector of the family at age 12, says he's been collecting Keepsake Ornaments since he was four years old. A precocious child, Cameron began selecting ornaments on his own – even at this early age. "I started buying them as gifts for my grandmother, mother, aunts and uncles," he recalls. "Then I started buying them for myself. It's fun."

With nearly 1,000 ornaments in his collection, most of them Keepsake Ornaments, he has developed a collector's eye for detail. "I look for something I like, with nice bright colors and detail," he says. As is true for collectors of all ages, Cameron



has trouble picking a favorite. Upon reflection, he suggests a "tie" for favorite would go to the "Here Comes Santa" and the "Nostalgic Houses and Shops" series. He also likes the Showcase Ornaments and Keepsake Ornaments with a sense of humor, such as "A Santa-Full" with the see-through tummy filled with Christmas cookies, and those featuring SHOEBOX characters like "Maxine" or Mrs. Lundquist from the "Spirit of Christmas Stress."

A student in the gifted program at Willow Creek Middle School, Cameron earns money to purchase additions to his collection by working nearly 10 hours a week at his father's dental practice, helping with administrative responsibilities such as filing charts. When not at work, doing his homework, or watching after his younger sisters Whitney and Natalie, he ponders innovative ways to display his collection. Cameron displays his collection in his room year 'round and attaches some of the lighter-weight ornaments to the ceiling with ribbons. The ribbons add a festive, decorative touch to the display, but be sure to attach

securely, he cautions.

Like many collectors, Cameron has ideas about Keepsake Ornament designs he'd like to see in the future. But mostly, he just enjoys collecting, wrapping up his feelings in just two words: "It's fun!"

HERE COMES THE "YULETIDE CENTRAL"

The new "Yuletide Central" Collector's Series is of special interest to those who collect trains, tin and ornaments. But its introduction may puzzle collectors who recall that the popular "Tin Locomotive" series was ended in 1989 after a successful eight-year run, due to increasing production costs. How is it possible to offer a new tin train series?

"To continue offering the 'Tin Locomotive' series, we would have had to increase the price substantially," explains Club Manager Rachel Perkal. "We felt that would be unfair to

collectors. But needless to say, the train collectors expressed their desire to see another such series in the Keepsake Ornament line.

"When the new series was developed," she continues, "we challenged everyone to utilize design and production efficiencies, while still giving you a beautiful series. Also, we adjusted the price, so the new 'Yuletide Central' designs more accurately reflect the increased costs we face."



HISTORICALLY SPEAKING

Keepsake Easter Ornaments Reflect Joyous Springtime Traditions

Bunnies, baskets, bonnets—today there are more Easter traditions than there are eggs rolling down the White House lawn. Where did these traditions come from?

We generally think of Easter as a Christian holiday. But our traditions include customs from a European springtime celebration brought to our country by German immigrants who arrived in Pennsylvania in the 18th century.

In German tradition, Easter Eve had almost as much significance as Christmas Eve. On Easter Eve, children built nests for the Easter hare, anticipating that if they were good, the Easter hare would visit during the night and lay brightly col-

Today, when friends and families gather for Easter egg rolls in yards, fields and on hills across the country, they are continuing a custom that is hundreds of years old.

ored eggs in the nest. Legend tells us that the hare was originally a large bird belonging to the goddess of spring, Eostre. One day, Eostre became angry with the bird and turned him into a hare. Today, baskets filled with colored eggs, small toys and candies have replaced the nests, and Eostre's hare has evolved into our Easter Bunny.

The egg has always been the most popular springtime symbol. Representing new life and regeneration, the egg has always held a deep cultural significance. It was during the Middle Ages that people began coloring eggs for spring-

time festivals.

Today, when friends and families gather for Easter egg rolls in yards, fields and on hills across the country, they are continuing a custom that is hundreds of years old. Rolling Easter eggs is a tra-

ditional English practice, said to symbolize the stone being rolled away from Christ's grave on Easter morning.

City when wealthy people drove carriages and strolled along Broadway toward Canal Street or along to the Battery after Easter Sunday services.

A new tradition since 1991 is the Keepsake Easter Ornament collection. These delightful



Since 1991, Keepsake Easter Ornaments have become a new tradition, celebrating the joys of spring. Pictured here are some of the newest treats for 1994: "Here Comes Easter," "Colorful Spring," "Peeping Out" and "Easter Art Show."

ditional English practice, said to symbolize the stone being rolled away from Christ's grave on Easter morning.

When you put on a new hat or dress just for Easter, you're participating in another age-old custom, one that dates back to the time when the new year began in March and people wore new clothing to signify a new beginning.

The Easter parade, with all its finery and color, began in the mid-19th century in New York

ornaments use bright colors and traditional Easter symbols to capture the joyful feeling of spring. An Easter tree decorated with ornaments fills a home with the delights of the season and the promise of bright times to come.

But however springtime is celebrated, the ancient traditions are observed—traditions that unite family and friends in a celebration of new life and new beginnings.

LOCAL CLUB'S ARTISTIC ANTICS GAIN ATTENTION

Soon after a local club in Minneapolis, Minnesota, decided they wanted an Artist's Appearance in their area, a trio of clever enticements began arriving at the national Club headquarters in Kansas City.

The first mailing from the Land of 10,000 Ornament Collectors Club was made up of fortune cookies boxed in take-out food containers and personalized for the Keepsake Ornament artists and staff. Dozens of thin paper strips imprinted with messages like "Frosty Friends' are waiting for you," and "Live Long and Prosper in Minnesota" were packed into each container. Every cookie contained the message: "A good time awaits you in Minnesota."

Not content with this feat, the club decided to strike again. "We felt we couldn't just do one thing," says local club president Nancy Struss. "We had to follow it up with something else."

Their next creation was a fun and fictitious magazine cover—the *Inquiring Collector* (see photo). This colorful cover came equipped with inside jokes and an easel back so it could be displayed—and enjoyed—by the Keepsakes staff.

Finally, a list of the top ten reasons why the club should have an Artist's Appearance arrived via the Fax machine. Some of the most amusing reasons were: (#10) "If you thought we were obnoxious at the conventions, wait till you see us at home" and (#2) "We don't eat Seales."



Local club member Julie Reeve created the *Inquiring Collector*, as well as the other attention-getters sent to the national Club by the Land of 10,000 Ornament Collectors Club. Club president Nancy Struss says Julie's talents are really appreciated by the club. In fact, Julie's club logo design earned "First Runner-Up" at the first 1993 Collector's Club Convention contest.

Just who was responsible for these antics? Club president Nancy Struss confessed to coordinating an idea-starting supper with members Julie Reeve, Ann Geister (manager of the club's sponsoring Hallmark store), and club newsletter editor Pat Twite. Julie Reeve took the artistic lead in the project. "All three ideas really originated with her," Nancy explains, "We just helped put everything together."

Did the club's efforts work? Watch for our schedule of events in a future *Courier* to find out!



"First Hello" is Yours When You Give a Membership

The special ornament, "First Hello," is the Club's gift to you every time you give the gift of membership to a friend or relative during the 1994 Club year. The handcrafted design, which symbolizes friendship, features a charming bunny with a newly hatched chick. And the colors of the lovely design make it especially well-suited for display during warm weather months, while you're waiting to decorate for the holidays!

Any 1994 member who enrolls a new member using the special gift application will receive the gift ornament. The application will be included with your membership renewal, and photocopies of the special application will be accepted.



COURIER MAILBOX

Courier's Quiz Contest Winners

Congratulations to the winners of the Collector's Quiz from the Volume Seven, Number Three, 1993 *Courier*. Winners Lisa Williamson of Carrollton, Georgia; Theresa Ledvina of Forest Park, Illinois; and Ryan Dean LeGrand of Sapulpa, Oklahoma, each received a complete set of 1993 Keepsake Miniature Ornaments. A special thank you to Guy Groff of Pitman, New Jersey, who created the quiz.

Collector's Guide Correction

Please note that in the new *Keepsake Ornaments: A Collector's Guide*, Julia Lee should have been listed as the artist on the following ornaments:

Page 69: 1992 "Tasty Christmas" (975QX599-4) and "A Santa-Full!" (975QX599-1), Page 125: 1989 "Dad" (725QX441-2), Page 128: 1989 "Friendship Time" (975QX413-2), and Page 374: 1992 "Christmas Copter" (575QXM584-4).

Need to Contact The Club?

Is it time to renew? Membership renewals will be mailed around the first of May. If you need to notify the Club of a change in your address, wish to send us a letter, or renew, you can contact us at:

Hallmark Cards, Inc.
Hallmark Keepsake Ornament
Collector's Club #161
P.O. Box 412734
Kansas City, Mo., 64141-2734
Telephone: 816-274-4000



Dear Courier,

I thought I would send you this picture of my friend and co-worker, Ruth Reardon, and tell you about how she shares her wonderful Keepsake Ornaments with all of us at work.

Since Ruth joined our Insurance Company three years ago, from July until December, Ruth brings in a different ornament each day for all of us to see and touch. People in the department make sure they drop by during the day to see the new "ornament a day!"

A few people have even become Club members because of Ruth, including myself. Ruth made me a member for my birthday. It is a treasured gift.

Sincerely,

Barbara Edwards
Normal, Illinois

One final note . . .

We periodically change the
look of the Collector's Courier.
We hope you'll enjoy our fresh,
new approach!



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