

"A CHRISTMAS CARD"

Christmas is the happiest and best time of the year for me. And it has been that way for as long as I can remember. I start to think about Christmas and making plans for this wonderful holiday sometime in October. Maybe I am a kid at heart, but I suspect many others feel that way too. Strong emotions about the Christmas season were given to me by my parents. They always made sure that it was a happy time for myself, my brother and my sisters. It was a time for family and for home. It was a time of giving to others and relishing the enormously good feeling one gets from those gestures. And the theme for us, always, was centered around our home.

I think that for Golf Course Superintendents, more than most others in different professions, Christmas **should** be a time for home and family. For too many months of the year we are not home as often as we want to be nor as often as we should be. This season gives us an opportunity to make the holiday something special for our families, much like my mom and dad did for me, I guess. I certainly am not trying to preach, but my happiness and anticipation of this season bless me with such good feelings that I would want everyone to be as lucky as I am right now, feeling the way I do.

Others have felt the same way, and have written about it. Near the end

of his novel, "The Great Gatsby," F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote about returning home for Christmas. I have read these paragraphs a hundred times and my love of them never diminishes. They are really special for another reason. Just as surely as autumn is New England and spring is Kentucky, Wisconsin represents the Christmas season to me. Fitzgerald wrote of Christmas in Wisconsin thus — "One of my most vivid memories is of coming back at Christmas time. I remember the chatter of frozen breath and the long green tickets clasped tight in our gloved hands. And last the murky yellow cars of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul railroad looking cheerful as Christmas itself on the tracks beside the gate.

"When we pulled out into the winter night and the real snow, our snow, began to stretch out beside us and twinkle against the windows, and the dim lights of small Wisconsin stations moved by, a sharp wild brace came suddenly into the air.

"That's my Middle West — the thrilling returning trains of my youth, and the street lamps and sleigh bells in the frosty dark and the shadows of holly wreaths thrown by lighted windows on the snow."

Christmas is a coming home of the heart. Charles Dickens, probably more closely associated with Christmas than any other author, wrote this in "A Christmas Tree:" "And I do come home at Christmas. We all do, or we all should. We all come home, or ought to come home, for a short holiday — the longer, the better — from the great boarding-school, where we are forever working at our arithmetical slates, to take, and give a rest."

I hope that wherever you may be this Christmas, your heart and your family and your home will be filled with peace, happiness and joy. On the first Christmas, a multitude of heavenly host proclaimed:

"Glory to God in the highest,

And on earth peace, good will toward men."

No words ever written could express our feelings any better. From myself, Cheryl, Amy, Holly and Christie to everyone in your families, is the hope that this joyous season brings everyone that gathers around your Christmas tree happiness and good health.

Monroe S. Miller

My Christmas Wish To You!

