

CHRISTMAS PLANS!!

Each of us has his own ideas about how to spend Christmas. For some of us it's a time to run away to an exotic place and just get away from it all. For others, it's a time to head to relatives or friends and spend the holiday enjoying old friendships, and feeling the ties of family.

Some people like to head for snowbound areas, while others prefer to find a quiet corner in the sun.

But no matter who you are, Christmas almost always means a time of joy and rejoicing. For even those people who are not Christians seem to catch the true meaning of the spirit of Christmas.

It's no different for David, of course. Christmas has always meant a time of peace and happiness for him. His first Christmases were spent in New Jersey, of course. The family would gather at the home of David's maternal grandparents, and they would all sing Christmas carols together, exchange gifts, go off to church on Christmas morning and then go back

home for an enormous meal of turkey, cranberry sauce, dressing and afterwards, lots of pumpkin pie!

Of course, there was often lots of snow outside, and the biggest thrill of all was when there was no snow at all on Christmas Eve. Then, like magic, snow would begin to fall in the evening, and by the time dawn came, there would be inches of the powdery white stuff, drifting around the house.

That is typical of American Christmases, but really only on the East coast. In California, things are quite different.

For a start, the temperature in December just about eliminates any chance of snow. Sixty-five degrees Fahrenheit is just a bit too warm for snow drifts!

INFORMAL

But the casual atmosphere of California also makes a few subtle but important differences in the way the holidays are spent.

Things are so informal that Christmas is much more of a spontaneous affair. It doesn't mean that there isn't the same feeling between people.

But what it does mean is that there is a bit less of the traditional happenings that you find on the East Coast.

That's understandable, really, because the weather and the geography tend to dominate everything in California.

It's not unusual for people to go swimming on Christmas Day in Southern California!

A lot of things, of course, are the same. Christmas dinner is still important, and of course gifts are exchanged. But, as I said before, it is on the whole a much more relaxed, casual affair than it is on the East coast.

So that just about takes care of all the places that David has spent his Christmases. Just about, I say, because, of course, David just might make it to another part of the world some Christmas.

Like Hawaii! David wanted to make it over last year, but his schedule was so tight that he just couldn't do it. But, he might manage this year, now that he's arranged a slightly slower pace for himself.

With all this in mind, as well as the old problem of "Christmas Past, Christmas Present and Christmas Future", I asked David about his plans for Christmas.

Even though it was the middle of November, I was surprised to hear David tell me that, as of then, he didn't have any!

"I don't know what I'm going to be doing yet," he began. "I



February of this year saw David "Down-under" playing to large crowds of happy Australians and New Zealanders.

