

HOLIDAYS: A MAGICAL TIME

by Sarah Chamberlain

Christmas, is there a more magical time for a child than Christmas?

For the very young, probably not. When I was about age 2, I got the toys appropriate for a 2 year old for Christmas. What fascinated me and what did I play with? A case of Carnation canned milk.

When I was 3, I got a lot of toys, most of which I don't remember but I got a pedal car. This was because I was born prematurely and ultimately diagnosed with a mild case of Cerebral Palsy. My parents were told that I would have a 40% chance of walking if I had surgery and then wore leg braces the rest of my life. My dad said no to the surgery, hence the pedal car.

When I was about 4, I got a Tiny Tears doll, a tricycle to go with the pedal car and a dart game that had suction cups that would stick to the "dart board" instead of sharp points. That was my favorite.

When I was 5, I got a record player and a lot of records to go with it. I drove my mom crazy because my favorite was "The William Tell Overture, more commonly known (at least in the younger set) as the Lone Ranger.

Unless Christmas Eve and/or Christmas fell on Wednesday or Thursday, my dad would have to go to work at about 2 p.m. He would work 3 to 11 p.m. Christmas and New Year's Eve, I would cook dinner. I would prepare "Bul Kogi", a Korean Beef dish, on one "Eve" and either Chicken Oahu or King Midas Chicken on New Year's.

One year when he got home, we all agreed that after dinner, we could all open 1 package from our Christmas stocking. Uh, yeah, along about 4 a.m., the living room was littered with wrapping paper and I was chomping at the bit to play my new records by the Dave Clark Five and Beatles.

Every year, my dad would take me Christmas Shopping for my mom, usually on Christmas Eve. I got my driver's license when I was 17.

Christmas that year was really special because I could go Christmas Shopping by myself. I bought pretty green water glasses and had them engraved in capital letters with a large "C" and a smaller "A" on the left of the C and an "L" on the right of the C. C represented Chamberlain while A and L were for Alton and Lillian.

I also started to do some of the grocery shopping. I had been buying my own books to read since I was about 9. Funny thing is, I would bring the groceries into the house and everything for me would disappear only to "magically" reappear on Christmas Eve. Little things were in our stockings and bigger things were wrapped.

To me, the "Magic of Christmas" is always going to be the memories.