

01.09.1975

Christmas was a freezing storm for the Shortgrass Country. Heavy strands of ice broke down the telephone and electrical service. However, roads stayed open so no advantage was received from the storm. Guests and in-laws arrived without interruption.

One of my neighbors had so much company that he should have been forced to take out a hotel and boarding house license. He had such a huge crows that the steam on the windows made his fireplace smoke. Kids were so thick in the front yard that the blast from firecrackers was barely audible.

Folks bring that sort of grief upon themselves. Review the classified ads: "large five bedroom, three bath house, plus converted guest quarters in garage." Or: "3200 feet of living space backed by a wet bar in a large playroom."

Much false honor was given the little pig who built his house of brick. The smart pig was the one who used destructible straw that left no signs or means for backtracking the owner.

Look how many grannies and grandpas have adopted a mobile home that can overnight in Amarillo and be 1500 miles away from a tough baby sitting assignment in 72 hours. Retired people don't go south for the climate. Retired people go south to dodge recycling diapers and avoiding combing wet cereal from their hair pieces.

My wife's family was cured of visiting us years ago. After all eight children had arrived, her folks' head medicine man couldn't have convinced them to visit our lodge.

Indians have unlimited resistance to the rigors of the outdoors. Cold winds, so they claim, refresh their spirits. In days of old, the thunder of hooves of wild buffalo drews them closer to the chase. Wolf packs howling through their campground lulled them to a deep sleep. Yet wild boys galloping through the house, leaving doors open, were too much for them in their strongest moments. Toy guns blasting in the air until the faucets would start dripping drove them away from my house.

As strong as they were, spilled oatmeal ground into smashed candy canes was too much. My lodge was as shunned as a fabled forbidden ground. Christmas became as private as one of their burial ceremonies.

Every Noel, people go around blabbing how nice it is to have a home at Christmas. The truth is how nice it is to still have a home left after Christmas. Poor farms aren't stocked by hermits or recluses. The gregarious ones are the poor souls who become wards of the county and state.

Child Who Sits in the Sun still burns signal fires in the yard for a landmark. Her people, however, never come. The boys have forsaken their wild ways, yet the power of the white-eye celebration continues to keep her kinsmen away.