



Santa visits A&M

Santa (Buford Shipley) listens to Debbie Murray's Christmas requests. Santa appeared at Moore Hall's floor decorating contest. Battalion photo by Sam Stroder

Christmas causes many to have Scrooge attitude

United Press International
What was wrong with Scrooge — whose "bah humbug" tried to dim the Christmas spirit of Tiny Tim and others in the Charles Dickens tale?

The old miser's attitude was a lot like that of some people who have a Christmas neurosis, says Dr. Lawrence Balter, professor of psychology.

"Scrooge could be thought of as a person who is protecting himself," Balter said. "His self-protective device is to not acknowledge friendly and warm feelings. By denying his concern for others and not allowing others to care about him, he wards off the possibility of being rejected."

"So, having a bitter exterior, he can keep himself safe from the risk of being hurt."

Balter said people in contemporary society who have negative reactions to the holiday season may have many reasons other than protecting themselves, of course.

"These other things tie into a whole host of different feelings peo-

ple have at this time of year," he said. "I would prefer to think of Thanksgiving through Christmas as the holiday season."

"And it's during this time of year that many people feel particularly sad. Very often it is because in their minds there is an ideal that they themselves are not living up to."

"It's a time when families are supposed to be together and having a good time and a lot of warmth and good cheer is supposed to be in abundance. However, in real life there are constant sources of friction and tension and real worries that can't possibly live up to that ideal fantasy."

Another reason people feel downbeat or sad around the holidays is that the season conjures up in their minds times past.

From the memory bank come tumbling visions of the holiday celebrations from childhood — when, if recollection serves correctly, they received a holiday from school and a lot of attention and gifts.

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Holiday diets may be disappointing, unfair

United Press International
UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. — People who try to lose weight during the holidays may be disappointed when they look at their scales on Jan. 2.

"If you're trying to lose weight between Christmas and New Year's you're probably setting an unrealistic goal," said Marian I. Hammond, assistant professor of nutrition at Pennsylvania State University. "It's very difficult to achieve, and you may feel guilty if you don't."

Look at the holidays as a time to maintain your weight — not lose it. If

you can maintain it in the face of increased social pressure and opportunities to eat and drink, you've won a great moral victory."

Hammond, coordinator of Penn State's Nutrition Clinic and Consultation Center, said persons on an exercise program can increase their daily routine to help compensate for increased caloric intake and that those who overeat on day can cut back their food consumption the next.

She said, in addition, people can use a variety of strategies in social situations to help keep their weight

constant.

"If you're going to a dinner party at 8 p.m., you may want to adjust your caloric budget by eating less at breakfast and lunch," she said. "But it may be wise to have a small snack of, say, 100 to 150 calories, at your normal dinner hour so you won't be famished by the time you arrive."

She said it is also important for weight-conscious persons to prepare themselves mentally for holiday social gatherings by setting realistic goals in terms of food consumption, evaluating the food choices available and choosing according to plan.

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