

# Weekly Message Weekly Message



Greetings as we enter the holiday season!  
Hope everyone is counting the days until school is out for the holidays. Final exams are going on and before long, college students will be headed home for the holidays, and other school students and teachers will be happy to get the fall semester behind them. For the young people in your life, starting today, they can phone a toll free number and hear a different message each day until Christmas from *Santa* (800/972-6242). Even the grown ups will love hearing Santa's voice (I did!).



Here are some thoughts for today and every day:

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**“It is often hard to distinguish between the hard knocks in life and those of opportunity.”**  
**Frederick Phillips**

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**“The only time we should look back to yesterday is to look at the positive things that were accomplished to encourage us to do better things today and tomorrow.”**  
**Stevie Wonder, musician**

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**“I’m not happy, I’m cheerful. There’s a difference. A happy woman has no cares at all.**  
**A cheerful woman has cares but has learned how to deal with them.”**  
**Beverly Sills, opera singer**

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**“An inch of progress is worth more than a yard of complaint.”**  
**Booker T. Washington (1856-1915) educator and activist**

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Make sure to note on your calendars to turn your TV to **ABC** at **noon** (central time) on **January 1st** for the kick off of the **Capital One Bowl in Orlando, Florida**. We will have a group of dancers participating in the outstanding halftime show. We will also have a group in **March** dancing at the halftime of the **Dallas Desperados** game



at the American Airlines Center. To learn more about these and other special events, visit our web site and click on Special Events.

As we head into the holiday season, I received a copy of this poem called "A Different Christmas." It helps us get an idea of what our beloved soldiers are going through overseas. If you would like to "adopt a soldier," you can go to <http://soldiersangels.org/>.

May you have a fabulous week ahead, and, as always, please keep in touch.

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*Sincerely,*

*Joyce E. Pennington, Pres. CEO*

*American Dance/Drill Team®*

*www.DanceADTS.com*

*800/462-5719*



## *A Different Christmas Poem*

The embers glowed softly, and in their dim light,  
I gazed round the room and I cherished the sight.  
My wife was asleep, her head on my chest,

My daughter beside me, angelic in rest.  
Outside the snow fell, a blanket of white,  
Transforming the yard to a winter delight.  
The sparkling lights in the tree I believe,  
Completed the magic that was Christmas Eve.  
My eyelids were heavy, my breathing was deep,  
Secure and surrounded by love I would sleep.  
In perfect contentment, or so it would seem,

So I slumbered, perhaps I started to dream.

The sound wasn't loud, and it wasn't too near,  
But I opened my eyes when it tickled my ear.  
Perhaps just a cough, I didn't quite know, Then the  
sure sound of footsteps outside in the snow.  
My soul gave a tremble, I struggled to hear,  
And I crept to the door just to see who was near.  
Standing out in the cold and the dark of the night,  
A lone figure stood, his face weary and tight.

A soldier, I puzzled, some twenty years old,  
Perhaps a Marine, huddled here in the cold.  
Alone in the dark, he looked up and smiled,  
Standing watch over me, and my wife and my child.  
"What are you doing?" I asked without fear,  
"Come in this moment, it's freezing out here!  
Put down your pack, brush the snow from your sleeve,  
You should be at home on a cold Christmas Eve!"

For barely a moment I saw his eyes shift,  
Away from the cold and the snow blown in drifts..  
To the window that danced with a warm fire's light  
Then he sighed and he said "Its really all right,  
I'm out here by choice. I'm here every night."  
"It's my duty to stand at the front of the line,  
That separates you from the darkest of times.  
No one had to ask or beg or implore me,  
I'm proud to stand here like my fathers before me.  
My Gramps died at 'Pearl on a day in December,"  
Then he sighed, "That's a Christmas 'Gram always remembers."  
My dad stood his watch in the jungles of 'Nam',  
And now it is my turn and so, here I am.

I've not seen my own son in more than a while,  
But my wife sends me pictures, he's sure got her smile.

Then he bent and he carefully pulled from his bag,  
The red, white, and blue... an American flag.  
I can live through the cold and the being alone,  
Away from my family, my house and my home.  
I can stand at my post through the rain and the sleet,  
I can sleep in a foxhole with little to eat.  
I can carry the weight of killing another,  
Or lay down my life with my sister and brother..  
Who stand at the front against any and all,  
To ensure for all time that this flag will not fall."

"So go back inside," he said, "harbor no fright,  
Your family is waiting and I'll be all right."  
"But isn't there something I can do, at the least,  
"Give you money," I asked, "or prepare you a feast?  
It seems all too little for all that you've done,  
For being away from your wife and your son."  
Then his eye welled a tear that held no regret,  
"Just tell us you love us, and never forget.  
To fight for our rights back at home while we're gone,  
To stand your own watch, no matter how long.  
For when we come home, either standing or dead,  
To know you remember we fought and we bled.  
Is payment enough, and with that we will trust,  
That we mattered to you as you mattered to us."

If for any reason you wish to be removed from the Weekly Message, simply reply to this e-mail with  
Remove in the subject line.