

CHRISTMAS 1980

'Twas the night before Christmas,
And all through HIKANATION,
The hikers had all collapsed
from excessive libation.
Rags stockings were hung by the Star Flite's screen door,
In hopes that we'd awaken in a VE-24.
The campers were nestled all snug in Polarguard
While visions of a Holiday Inn made sleeping quite hard.
Walkin' Bob in blue pj's,
And I in wool cap,
Had just blown our brains trying to follow the day's map.
When out in the campground there arose such a clatter,
that I sprang from my Ibez to see what was the matter.
Away to the pine trees I flew like a flash,
ignoring some hikers smoking some hash.
The moon, on the breast of 12 feet of new snow,
Lit up Gore-tex tents frozen below.
When, what to my wandering eyes should appear,
But a miniature airstream, a bit dented, I fear.
With a little old driver, so jolly and jaunty,
that I knew in a moment, it must be St. Monty.
He was driving so crazily I was frightened to death,
As he called out to hikers with a bellowing breath:
"Now Marika, now Shelley, now Jeannie and Jeri;
On Joe Shute, on John Stout, on Rex and Mary.
Today is a rest day, and I've picked up the mail,
Help me unload these presents so my airstream can sail."
He tore through the campsite so quick and so fast,
I was more than convinced he used Postum for gas.
He put it in park-as the campers drew near,
and they all eyed the presents St. Monty had here:
A new pack from Camp Trails,
Down booties from North Face,
And for our next border crossing,
Red Wine by the case.
As my eyes grew wider and I was turning around,
out leapt St. Monty from his van with a bound.
He was dressed in true fashion, from balaclava to Nikes,
though he admitted admiring the new Adidas of Mikey's.
U.P.S. boxes he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a hiker with the wrong size stuff sack.
His eyes, how they twinkled,
His dimples never slipped,
His cheeks were like roses,
But he wore a cracked lip.
He put the hikers to work delivering the loot
then stopped to chew on the laces of his boot.
"Your food boxes are pregnant," St. Monty cajoled;
"You're obviously not using box-birth control."

But then he turned serious and stood up to speak,
And we all listened more carefully than we had in a week.
"AHS has told me to wish all of you here
the merriest of Christmases, and a Happy New Year.
They'll see you in D.C., come hell or high water,
Put please remember the President's name is not Carter.
I know that the weather's been getting quite cold,
And I know too at times this venture seems old,
But you're all quite admired, I'm happy to say."
And I salute each of you on this Christmas day.
He turned around for a moment, then with a tug of his ear,
Gave to each from his sack a can of cold beer.
At that very moment the hikers came back
from delivering the boxes he had pulled from his pack.
"All done, St. Monty," John Stout did peep,
then he lay on the ground for a ten-minute sleep.
The horn of the airstream then gave it's last cry,
and we were all convinced it was ready to die.
St. Monty, his belly full from a Mountain House deal,
that shook when he laughed like a bowl of oatmeal,
Laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, to the Ford van he rose.
"I know you'll hang in there when the times do get harder,
so in case you've forgotten, tis the last call for water."
We all stood by and wished him Godspeed,
and thanked him again for his very fine deed.
Then with a smile and a downshift St. Monty burnt rubber,
And off in the night his airstream did hover.
We laughed and waved as he tore down the hill,
and were all truly touched by his brand of good will.
Then just as the trailer faded away,
While the moon still halted the start of the day,
We heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,
"Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good hike!"