



Chris' Corner

"IT WOULDN'T BE CHRISTMAS
WITHOUT FREDERICK & NELSON"



THE ADVERTISING SLOGAN OF A LOST LOCAL LANDMARK LIVES ON IN HAPPY HOLIDAY MEMORIES

As we enter the holiday season, I look forward to familiar holiday rituals. For me, rituals are connected to special moments and strong memories.

Holiday rituals in particular take us out of our everyday lives to create and recreate special, memorable moments. Most families have rituals of one form or another, and our holiday traditions have the power to transport us to holidays past; to recall warm, vivid memories of happy times spent with friends and loved ones.

If you talk to Seattle-area residents who have been here a little while, you are hard pressed to talk long about the holidays before someone mentions Frederick & Nelson. Although the classic department store closed before I moved to town, I am repeatedly impressed by the significant place it holds in the holiday memories of so many people.

The other night I was having dinner with some Chateau residents. Somehow, a reminiscence of Frederick & Nelson at Christmas became the sole topic of conversation. Everyone at the table, men and women aged 64 to 102 had specific memories of going to the now legendary city landmark with their families for a special holiday outing.

Everyone talked about the lavish decorations and enchanting window displays that changed with every year. Many recalled an era "when we'd all dress up, men in hats, ladies in gloves." People drove or took the streetcar downtown to the elegant white landmark on the corner of 5th and Pine for Santa photos with the kids, escalator rides to the 7th floor toy department to see bustling model train villages and say hello to the big mechanical elephant. Lunch was at the tea room, or if you were lucky, you enjoyed an ice cream sundae with a pitcher of

caramel sauce in the Paul Bunyan room. Frangos tasted better then. The elevators sported female models clicking castanets as

you passed from floor to floor. The uniformed doorman tipped his hat and held the door as you left a holiday wonderland, serenaded by Frederick & Nelson carolers.

The conversation, fueled by passionate nostalgia, soon meant we were the last ones lingering in the dining room. I was caught up in the magic of these memories. The fact that so many residents and their families made these special pilgrimages to Frederick & Nelson reveals its important cultural role in ongoing holiday rituals. The details varied with each generation, but the enthusiastic joy evident in each recollection spoke of a beloved

common gathering place, unique to this region and cherished in memory.

The ritual of gathering for a "special day out" with family, friends and loved ones is still a good idea, even in a post-Frederick & Nelson age. For me, it's what the holidays are all about, and the rituals we create, old and new, are always a source of comfort and good cheer.

Happy Holidays,

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