

# Editorial

by Rutherford

The main goal of CULTURELINK is to bring people together. We at BRIDGES hope that, by sharing the **unique** and special **perspectives** of our various cultures, we can help to enrich the lives of everyone - both Hosts and Newcomers alike. In each issue, we will try to feature a different holiday or festival - one that is important to one of our communities, and that by doing so we will help to explain a part of what makes that community special.

Here in North America, the most widely celebrated holiday of the year is Christmas (also written as 'Xmas'). Most people know that, for Christians, December 25th is intended to mark the birth of Jesus in Israel, 2,000 years ago. But here, its religious significance now takes second place to its value as a way for stores to sell you more 'things'. It is well-known, for instance, that many stores sell more in December than they do all year. Instead of a baby Jesus, the most common symbol at Christmastime is Santa Claus - a jolly old man in a red suit bringing presents. (Now available for purchase at a store near you . . . )



Photo by Rutherford

Of course, everyone enjoys being able to give gifts to family and loved ones, but it is too easy to be convinced that buying things is the best (or most acceptable) way to show our true feelings. It is also too easy for our children to learn that material **possessions** can be **substitutes** for our time and our attention. Television and advertising tries very hard to teach children that they must have certain clothes or other things to be accepted by their friends. While in families that cannot afford to buy all the things advertised on television everyone then feels badly.

Although it helps to keep our economy going, this dependence on more and more is the single biggest threat to the health of our planet - and to the health of our spirit.

It is very difficult to resist the call of consumerism. But we must try to rediscover the real (and more important) rewards of family and friends.

All the advertising we see and hear will try to **persuade** us otherwise. That's its job. It speaks for business. We must listen instead for the voice of the spirit in quieter places. That is the greatest gift of all . . .

## Happy New Year from all of us at BRIDGES