

## **Among the Funniest Books Ever Written: *Review of Skipping Christmas***

*Skipping Christmas* by John Grisham  
Reviewed by Julie Tomlianovich, South Central System

As the holidays approach it is time to begin constructing lists for gift-giving, entertaining, decorating, and the perusing of the endless supply of mail order catalogs. The total cost of all this merriment and joy can be in the thousands and as Luther Krank in *Skipping Christmas* discovers, he has nothing to show for it.

Grisham, best known for his intense courtroom dramas, tackles what for some is an inherited compulsion to send cards, decorate inside and outside, and shop with a fervor unmatched only by those with other convictions of particular social beliefs. When the Krank's twenty-something daughter, a Peace Corps volunteer, leaves for a year in Peru, her father decides this is the year to skip Christmas. After calculating the previous year's expenditures, Luther convinces his wife they will not decorate, send cards, give gifts, have a party, go to his office party, put up a tree or outside lights, but use that money for a ten-day cruise. On the face of it, it is a good plan. But when they are faced with disapproving nose neighbors, indignant carolers, Boy Scouts, policemen and paramedics with hurt feelings, even the most tempting get-away begins to lose some of its glitter. Luther's wife Nora is having the most anxiety with the plan and when the anonymous "Free Frosty" cards begin arriving, she wonders if maybe they could put the giant lighted Frosty on the roof so their house will match their neighbors in the yearly neighborhood decorating challenge.

Just as Luther and Nora dance around their living room in preparation to leave on their cruise, their daughter calls to say she is in Miami with her new fiancé and they are on their way so that he may experience a real American Christmas with the party, tree, decorations and gifts.

This Christmas Eve day is one that no one could ever have imagined. The pressure to conform to the expectations of the community is exerted by almost all of the Kranks' acquaintances, neighbors and even the local newspaper. *Skipping Christmas* is laugh-out-loud funny, but there is guilty pleasure in wishing for a warm sunny beach while circling the mall parking lot.

