

HAPPY GRAPEFRUIT TO YOU

(Originally published January 1966)

It is always a good feeling to get the Christmas and holiday season behind us, if for no other reason than to throw away the accumulated pile of Christmas gift catalogues. The business of mail-order shopping for Christmas has mushroomed into a monstrous affair. Every year the stack of catalogues, which begin arriving in late October, rises higher and higher. By mid December, the desk and tables in our den at home take on the confusion of a clearance sale at a second-hand bookstore.

It all started innocently enough a number of years ago when someone sent us a package gift of fruit. The next year we were on the catalogue mailing list for that gift order house. We took the easy way out and succumbed to the bright colors and shopping-made-simple-by-mail temptation and sent off an order of our own. Over the years the catalogues have multiplied like rabbits. We undoubtedly were charter members of the master mailing list to which all mail order houses must subscribe, and this year the catalogues not only arrived by the basket load but also came from all points of the compass, including England, Hong Kong, Switzerland, France and Mexico.

Last year we successfully resisted ordering a full-sized Chinese junk, just the gift for some of our boating friends and an ideal pleasure craft for the Chattahoochee backwaters from the Neiman Marcus (Texas, where else?) catalogue. And this year we have somehow managed to get by without sending for the \$130 pot of Golden Caviar in a crystal dish or given in to the urge for a His and Hers Para Sail Water ski outfit complete with Lone Star Mustang Runabout and outboard motor at \$1455 each.

However, despite our antipathy to Christmas gift mail-order forms, we do find them convenient. Each year as more of the catalogues appear to complicate our pre-Christmas lives, we will probably continue to use them, merrily exchanging hams, cheese balls and smoked turkeys with all of our friends who seem to be caught in the same mail-order trap.

AND A HAPPY RUBY RED GRAPEFRUIT TO YOU FOR '66